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ABSTRACT

The Media and Society section of this collection of conference presentations contains the following 14 papers: "A Portrait of Urban Conflict: The 'L.A. Times' Coverage of the Los Angeles Riots" (Tony Atwater and Niranjala D. Weerakkody); "Perceptions of News Media Managers toward Their Own Corporate Community Responsibility" (David A. Olsen and others); "Personalization of the News and Burke's Notion of Circumference: A Case Study of Press Coverage of the 'Navajo Flu'" (Nancy Mitchell); "Phenomenology as Communication Science: A Study of Parasocial Interaction in TV News" (Russell J. Cook); "Press Theories, Practices, and Their Legacies for the Future of the News Media" (Patrick Daley); "The Black Press and the 1970 Trinidadian Black Power Revolt: An Examination of the 'New Pittsburgh Courier'" (Lisa A. McClean); "News Values and the Oppressed: U.S. News and the Brazilian Street Children, 1989-1993" (Jack Lule); "The Influence of Tabloid-Style TV News on Viewer Recall, Interest and Perception of Importance" (Michael E. Cremedas and Fiona Chew); "How Editors and Readers Rank the Importance of 18 Traditional Standards of Newspaper Excellence" (George Albert Gladney); "Broadcast Hoaxes: Good Clean Fun or Public Harm? A Study of the FCC's Regulation of Broadcast Hoaxes" (Cyndy A. Cooper); "Newspaper Subscribing and Community Integration: The Role of Ties to Local Church Communities" (Judith M. Buddenbaum); "Newsroom Views about Consultants in Local TV: The Effect of Work Roles and Socialization" (Dan Berkowitz and others); "An Ethnic Study of Polarization in a Multi-Channel Environment" (Don Umphrey and Alan B. Albarran); and "Information Subsidies and Agenda Building: A Study of Local Radio News" (Joseph E. Burns). (RS)

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Part III: Media and Society.

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A PORTRAIT OF URBAN CONFLICT: THE L.A. TIMES COVERAGE OF THE LOS ANGELES RIOTS

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A research paper presented to the Newspaper Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication at the 1994 AEJMC Convention, Atlanta.

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A PORTRAIT OF URBAN CONFLICT: THE L.A. TIMES COVERAGE OF THE LOS ANGELES RIOTS

BY

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ABSTRACT

A total of 247 news items relating to the Los Angeles Riots of 1992, as published in the L.A. Times were analyzed. The purpose of the study was to provide descriptive evidence of how this major national daily covered one of the nation's deadliest social conflicts. A content analysis was undertaken to examine how media coverage of the riots compared to findings from earlier studies on media coverage of crises. The findings showed that the L.A. Times devoted 28 percent of published stories on the riot to stories that qualified as commentary/analysis. The results also indicated that the sources most relied upon in covering the riots were non-traditional (and non-official) sources.

INTRODUCTION

On April 29, 1992 south central Los Angeles was the site of social discord and violence following the acquittal of four white L.A. police officers charged in the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King. For approximately three days the "City of Angels" was ravaged by arson and looting as race relations in America became the focus of world attention. One of the nation's largest and most respected news organizations, The Los Angeles Times, chronicled the events of the Los Angeles riots, although it did not (at the time) staff a south central news bureau. For this major national daily, the incident became a subject of both local and national news coverage.

The mass media play an important role in times of crisis as news consumers depend on media to learn about the impact and resolution of immediate and potentially harmful conditions to social welfare. Newspapers have been considered important agents in composing the first draft of history and have been popularly regarded as the medium of record. This study comprehensively examined the nature of coverage, which the L.A. Times devoted to the Los Angeles riots to provide a case study of how a major national daily covered a crisis event in its own back yard. The authors have attempted to systematically assess the narrative portrayal of this historically significant event to contribute to the body of research on media coverage of social conflict.

The nature of the L.A. Times coverage of the Los Angeles riots was examined with respect to several issues. The study investigated the topics that consumed the most attention in the several days comprising the height of unrest in south central L.A. Secondly, the study examined specific news sources relied upon by the L.A. Times in covering one of the nation's deadliest riots. Thirdly, the volume of riot coverage was examined over a five-day period to assess the overall emphasis given to the story and relative story treatment on specific days of the crisis.

The analysis also assessed the extent to which the L.A. Times coverage reflected commentary and analysis in reporting the riot. An effort was made to describe the amount of coverage devoted to hard news, analyses and human interest stories. Finally, the study examined the frequency of story topics and news sources reported over a five-day period covering the outset of the riot and its subsequent arrest.

The above issues were regarded as important in understanding the range of perspectives and topics that the L.A. Times exhibited in reporting the crisis to both local and national audiences. A central issue in the aftermath of the riot involved the lack of public awareness of antecedent and potentially precipitating factors to the Los Angeles riots. This study attempted to explore the extent to which the L.A. Times provided an analysis of potential conditions that contributed to the urban violence in the spring of 1992.

The literature on media coverage of crises and social conflict suggests that mass media, particularly television, portray crises and disasters in dramatic terms with less attention to analysis and interpretation. In his study of television network coverage of the TWA hostage crisis, Atwater (1987) found that only nine percent of stories on evening newscasts provided commentary and analysis. Knudson (1974) examined the news coverage of the Chilean coup in 20 national and local newspapers. He observed that surface violence was the focus of news accounts while underlying social, economic and political factors were largely ignored.

Larson (1986) analyzed network television coverage of Iran between 1972 and 1981. He observed that television, like the print media, provides saturation coverage on a "big story" while failing to capture historical perspective and context. He concluded that policy-makers, as well as television journalists, missed a major part of the scenario leading up to the Iran hostage crisis and its dramatic portrayal.

How events and conditions become interpreted as crises has also been the subject of investigations by social scientists. According to Edelman (1980), a crisis is an episode in a long sequence of similar problems, and no characteristic of any episode makes it the precipitant of a crisis. Offe (1984) defined crises as "processes" in which the structure of a system is called into question. He suggested that a crisis is a chain of events often confined to a short period of time. Consequently, by failing to link events with social structures, the media risk not seeing a crisis as characteristic of a general state of affairs.

Raboy and Dagenais (1992) have defined a crisis as a real or perceived "disruption" of social order. They observed that attributing crisis status to a particular situation or event is influenced by ideological or political orientations. Attributing crisis status to national and international events has become an essential function of the media. As the media report crises, news organizations also reveal individual and shared motivations for covering such incidents.

Consequently, the media is an important source that influences social perception during crisis events. Soderlund and Schmitt (1986) noted that the public depends on the media to develop informed opinions about important issues. They posited that this dependency exists because consumers are unable to evaluate issues and events beyond their immediate environments. Similarly, Cuthbert, Kent & Evans (1987) concluded that when an event occurs beyond one's local environment, media reports become critical due to limited information upon which to assess the event.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) concluded that, whereas the media may not directly influence what people think, the media do influence what people think about. Noelle-Neumann and Mathes (1987) found that when reporting is consonant, i.e. conveys the same message or theme, the media may influence which news topics are regarded as important and what individuals perceive to be the "prevailing" public opinion on a given issue. News organizations such as The Los Angeles Times have additional influence as members of the so-called "prestige press." Stempel (1961) noted that the prestige press wields significant influence with other newspapers and may be regarded as an "opinion leader" of the newspaper industry.

The performance of media in covering major events often has been described in content analyses. For example, Kristiansen, Fowlie & Spencer (1982) examined such variables as topical emphasis, while media reliance on news sources was studied by Berkowitz (1987) and Hornig, Walters and Templin (1991). Content analysis often has been employed to describe reporting trends and the editorial character of news accounts. This study used content analysis to describe how the L.A. Times covered the L.A. riots over a five-day period - between April 30 and May 4, 1992.

Herbert Gans points out that sources categorized as "knowns" such as political, social, or cultural elites make the news, about four times as often as "unknowns" or ordinary people. He also adds that people in the news are most often the sources of news (Gans, 1979). According to Sigal, (1986), reporters try to attribute stories and especially their interpretations to these "known" sources of news, in order to be objective. The higher in rank an officials is, the more authoritative he or she is presumed to be. According to him, ordinary people are not likely to make the news except as the perpetrators or victims of a crime or if caught up in official proceedings. Sigal added that in cases of controversy, reporters try to balance their sources with conflicting perspectives. Therefore, he posited, who reporters talk to conveys great insight into the nature of a story.

Some critics and social commentators have suggested that media coverage of the Los Angeles riots was lacking and not well informed from minority perspectives. Rubenstein (1992) noted that conditions identified as causes of urban violence in the 1960's and in the aftermath of the Watts riots had worsened two decades later. O'Neill (1992) describes how journalists were severely attacked by angry mobs while covering the riots. Merida (1992) noted that black journalists, who are not generally assigned to prestigious stories at the L.A. Times were sought out to cover the L.A. riots during the height of the disturbances simply due to their ethnicity, but they had very limited editorial roles, as the actual stories published were written by other non-minority journalists. Similarly, media observers (Baird, 1992; Merida, 1992) noted that some black reporters felt that they were not given noteworthy writing assignments depicting the riots and their aftermath, despite reporting on these developments from the field.

To empirically describe the coverage which the L.A. Times devoted to the crisis, the study addressed several research issues.

1. What was the volume of news coverage devoted to the riots from their outbreak to their conclusion?

2. What was the amount of coverage devoted to hard news, features and analysis during the riots?

3. What specific sources were most frequently relied upon in reporting the riots to local and national readers?

4. What was the incidence of photographs accompanying news accounts of the riots?

5. What were the topics which received major emphasis in the L.A. Times coverage of the crisis?

The above issues and others were explored to provide an editorial snap shot or portrait of the national crisis as it was reported by one of the nation's leading daily, national newspapers. A specific objective was to assess the L.A. Times handling of the riots relative to reporting trends and practices noted in earlier studies on media coverage of crises. An additional objective was to assess the extent to which the L.A. Times provided analytical coverage of causes and conditions which may have contributed to the riots beyond the controversial Rodney King verdict.

Method

Following the guidelines set out in Berelson (1952), and Martin and Nelson (1956), the "Facts on File" was used as an objective determinant to identify the specific days in which the L.A. riots occurred (see Appendix I). As a result, the period between April 29 and May 3, 1992 was taken as the period relevant to the study of the L.A. Times riot coverage. Accordingly, entire editions of the newspaper published between April 30 and May 4, 1992 (which carried the news of the five days under study) were selected for content analysis and were coded with the aid of a 32-item coding instrument. Using the criteria set out in Meeske and Javaheri (1982), all stories that mentioned the L.A. riots, Rodney King / Trial, efforts to control the riots, their antecedent conditions and aftermath were included in the analysis. Additionally, stories relating to statements made by private citizens and officials about the riots or their causes, and other relevant issues were selected for coding.

Riot stories were coded as to the page and section in which they originally appeared in published editions of the paper. These stories were also coded as to the length of each story (measured in column inches) and as to whether they included photographs. The above measures were used to examine the play and placement of riot stories. The story type of each article was categorized as hard news (time-bound spot news); commentary / analysis (stories that provide context and perspective, furnish background information, and give more reflective accounts); human interest/feature (items that are not time-bound and that relate the human side) or "other" (stories which do not fall under the above categories and included editorials, letters to the editor etc.). The procedures outlined in Windhauser and Stempel III, (1979) were used as guidelines in selecting story type, space measurement, and story topic.

After reading each news story, the three most dominant topics / themes addressed were identified and were coded under 20 selected categories and an "other" category. These categories were the Rodney King trial, looting and related violence, repercussions of civil disturbances (including imposition of curfew, disruption of services, postponement of events etc.), maintenance of law and order during the riots (includes mobilization of troops, and activities of law enforcement and other services), the Reginald Denny assault (includes arrest/trial of his alleged attackers), related civil disturbances in other US cities, reaction of social groups (includes statements/visits by civil/human rights organizations and community leaders), reactions of government and political sources (includes statements /visits to the riot torn areas by local, state, and national politicians including the President and presidential hopefuls), reactions of Rodney King, his family and friends, reaction of foreign dignitaries (statements issued by foreign political and other leaders), reactions of domestic and international press to the riots (statements issued by them on the riots), the LAPD's role in handling the riots (includes actions of the LAPD and Daryl Gates after the Rodney King verdict and during the riots), the LAPD's defense against criticisms on the handling of the riots (excluding statements on the Rodney King beating/trial/verdict), reconstruction of LA (all actions taken and statements issued on the subject), apprehension and prosecution of rioters and looters (includes judicial proceedings against rioters and looters but excludes the Reginald Denny incident and its suspects), safety and the protection of residents (including increased gun sales in LA), crimes against Korean-owned businesses, antecedent conditions/causes for the riots (includes references to race relations, the Watts riots, causes of riots such as poverty, unemployment, racism etc.), improvement /resolution of racial tensions (methods and actions suggested to ease racial tensions and its causes) and calm returns. The "other" category included topics that did not relate to either of the above categories.

As for news sources cited in each article, 17 categories were generated from a preliminary review of the story data. These categories included: local journalists (ones based in LA and/or CA and working for media organizations in LA or CA), national /international journalists (journalists based anywhere but working for media organizations outside of CA, or all journalists who do not qualify as local journalists), LAPD officials/spokespersons, fire fighters, National Guard /Army officials/spokespersons (of those taking part in the maintenance of law and order in L.A.), L.A. city, state and federal officials /spokespersons (legislators/ administrators including President, presidential hopefuls, senators, congressmen, and officials of the White House/Pentagon, Senate etc.), eye witnesses (excluding victims in terms of self or family members), riot victims (includes those who lost jobs and/or businesses due to riots), community leaders (includes community or trade union leaders, local civic organizers etc.), store owners (of the area but not directly affected by the riots themselves), residents of L.A. and California (those not directly affected by the riots), state prosecuting officials (involved with prosecuting rioters/

looters), defense attorneys for police officers accused in the Rodney King Trial, and proponents/opponents of the LAPD, and "others" (those who do not fall under any of the above categories such as experts, social scientists, psychologists, academics, celebrities, social workers etc.) These categories were used to examine the diversity of sources cited in the riot coverage. Relevant news stories were coded as to whether they did or did not cite one or more of the above news sources.

A total of 247 news stories qualified as riot stories and were included in the analysis. A comprehensive content analysis was undertaken to address the research issues noted earlier. Riot stories were systematically coded using a four-page coding manual and a two-page coding instrument. Ten percent of riot stories published over the study period was randomly selected and recoded by a second coder for intercoder reliability. The overall percentage of agreement for the judgmental variables was 92.3.

During the data analysis, some categories generated for the variable "story topic" were combined (based on their similarity) to insure mutual exclusivity of topic categories. Accordingly, stories on looting and related violence, repercussions of violence, related disturbances in other cities, and crimes against Korean-owned businesses were combined as "Violence". Stories dealing with the LAPD's role in handling the riots and the LAPD's defense against criticisms were combined as "LAPD". The stories on the maintenance of law and order, apprehension and prosecution of rioters and looters, and the safety and protection of residents were combined as "law and order", while reactions of social groups, reactions of government and political sources, reactions of Rodney King, his family and friends, reactions of foreign dignitaries, and reactions of the domestic and international press were combined as "Reactions to riots."

In addition to the content analysis, an in-depth interview was conducted by telephone with Leo Wolinsky, the city editor of the L.A. Times. The interview obtained his perceptions regarding the topics covered during the riots and news sources used by the paper in reporting the crisis. Other issues discussed in the interview included story treatment, editorial balance in riot coverage, and common problems faced by reporters in the field. Wolinsky was asked how the newspaper's riot coverage could have been improved and what the media could do to help preclude future civil disturbances.

Results

The data on the L.A. Times coverage of this national crisis reflect consistencies and deviations from previous studies on media coverage of crises. Over the five-day period examined, nearly 42 percent of the paper's 247 stories on the riots dealt with the dramatic and deadly violence of the riots. The data in Table 1 show the percentages of riot stories devoted to specific topics. In addition to capturing the looting and burning which took place, 17 percent of the stories involved the Rodney King trial. These findings are consistent with other studies that have found that the media place heavy emphasis on the dramatic, sensational or controversial aspects of domestic and international crises. The results were not surprising, as the first five days of the riots represented a volatile environment for citizens and police officials. The editorial focus on violence was strongest on May 1 when the looting and rioting figured prominently in the newspaper's second day of riot coverage. As the violent activities diminished and were halted, editorial attention to violence declined to about 10 percent of riot stories on the fifth day of coverage (May 4). Stories relating to law and order accounted for nine percent of news items and appeared most often in the May 2nd and May 3rd editions when the presence of Army soldiers and National Guard troops escalated. This finding supported Leo Wolinsky's comment that the LAPD had done little during the first two days of the riots, and until the Army and the National Guard were called in, there had been no signs of law and order in the area (L. Wolinsky, personal communication, December 18, 1992). Whereas "Rodney King Trial" was found to be the second most frequent topic, the data showed that the topic was emphasized most during the first two days of the L.A. Times riot coverage.

A noticeable deviation from earlier findings was the attention the newspaper gave to stories classified as commentary/ analyses. Table 2 lists percentage data on story types reported during the riots. While "hard news" was the dominant story type, commentaries and analyses accounted for almost 28 percent of riot stories. Commentary/Analysis reports were consistently published throughout the five-day period. They occurred most frequently in the first two days of riot coverage when rioting and looting were still underway in south central L.A.

Approximately 11 percent of the stories were classified as Human Interest/Features. This story type increased steadily over the period examined, peaking on the fifth day of the L.A. Times riot accounts. As the riots were gradually brought under control, it appears that the paper devoted increasing attention to the human dilemma experienced by victims of the crisis.

Table 3 shows the distribution of riot stories during the period examined and several measures of "story length" associated with these stories. Firstly, the data indicate that the L.A. Times reported between 21 and 78 riot stories per day comprising over 10,800 column inches. The average length of a story was approximately 44 column inches. The data indicate that the second day of coverage produced the heaviest volume of riot stories. This edition followed a day in which Los Angeles was firmly in the grip of social discord that had closed public schools and halted district bus service. Also, looting and demonstrations had spread to other parts of the country.

The volume of news coverage was also analyzed relative to "story type." The data in Table 4 again demonstrate that hard news and commentary/analysis were the two story types which generated the most column inches in the riot coverage. This finding is consistent with the earlier finding that the two most frequent story types were hard news (36 percent) and commentary analysis (nearly 28 percent). Together, these findings demonstrate that analysis was an integral feature of the newspaper's reporting on the L.A. riots.

Another aspect of news content examined was the incidence of photographs in riot stories. The data in the first column of Table 5 indicate that 44 percent of riot stories included a photograph. Violent acts associated with the riots and the Rodney King trial were the topics that most frequently received photo treatment. Almost 45 percent of photographs accompanying riot stories were associated with the topic "violence." Photographs depicting violence appeared four times more frequently than those associated with the topic "law and order."

Findings on the use of photographs in the L.A. Times riot coverage again demonstrated the media's tendency to invest in dramatic and controversial elements of a crisis. Finally, the use of sources in riot stories. The data in Table 6 show that L.A. residents and community leaders were cited most often in riot stories published in the L.A.Times. Over the five-day period, L.A. residents were consistently cited in riot stories. This finding contrasts with the findings of some earlier studies which suggested that the media strongly rely on official sources in covering crises. This fact could be explained by Wolinsky's statement that "the riots themselves taught us that you can't rely on the same (official) sources you always quoted. ... We found out that they were very much out of touch with what was happening." He claimed that as the riots broke out, they (the L.A. Times) endeavored to expand the list of people - to community leaders such as Rev. Cecil Murray and the prominent Korean-American lawyer Angela Oh, who have since become regular sources (L. Wolinsky, personal communication, December 18, 1992).

Store owners represented another non-official source that received attention in the riot coverage. While they did not dominate as news sources, officials were regularly cited in accounts of the L.A. riots. When official sources were cited, they typically were municipal, federal or city police department officials.

Discussion

The L.A. Times coverage of the L.A. Riots was dominated by hard news both in terms of news space and frequency of stories. This result is consistent with other analyses of media coverage of crises. This outcome also appears linked to the volatile situation that prevailed in L.A. during the period.

The May 1st edition exhibited the heaviest riot coverage both in terms of total column inches and frequency of stories. This appears due to the edition's focus on the first full day of rioting (April 30). L.A. Times City Editor Leo Wolinsky recalled that May 1 marked the heaviest day of riot coverage for his paper (L. Wolinsky, personal communication, 18 th December, 1992).

The topical emphasis of riot stories by date proved interesting. April 30th only dealt with violence (4 stories), and the King trial (17 stories). This seems to be due to the outbreak of rioting having occurred on the evening of April 29, just before the next day's paper went to press. The low number of stories on the maintenance of law and order (21), as compared to the topic "violence" (103) illustrates that law enforcement authorities were relatively inactive during this period.

The widespread occurrence of violence and the graphic nature of the riots suggested why violence was the topic that was most often accompanied by photographs. In all, 44.1 percent of riot stories carried pictures.

Leo Wolinsky stated that as the riots progressed, the L.A. Times began to rely more on "non-traditional" sources. However, commonly cited sources included the usually-relied upon government sources and the ordinary person on the street. According to the study results, the "non-traditional" sources were often local community leaders.

Overall, the L.A. Times riot coverage was extensive in terms of the number of stories, news space, diversity of topics addressed and sources quoted. Because the crisis was a local story, the newspaper was ideally situated to cover the event compared to its peer national newspapers. This logistical advantage afforded the newspaper easier access to news scenes, familiarity with the region and alternative options for acquiring needed editorial resources.

The findings indicated that during the riots, the L.A. Times addressed the antecedent conditions of the crisis and was not vulnerable to a familiar criticism of media coverage of crises. Media attention to antecedent conditions prior to social discord might provide preemptive strategies for avoiding incidents like the L.A. riots. In fact the L.A. Times which earlier resisted suggestions to publish a special section devoted to the inner city, created a zoned section called the "City Times" in September 1992 (Cray, 1993).

Future research should extend this analysis to include the aftermath of the riots, while including other members of the national print and electronic media. This approach would facilitate inter-media comparisons that might ascertain whether the L.A. Times performed an agenda-setting function in national media coverage of the crisis.

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Table 1

Representation of Most Emphasized Topic by Date in the LA Times Coverage

Topic		Date					Total
		Apr. 30	May 1	May 2	May 3	May 4	
Violence	*%*	3.9	40.8	26.2	19.4	9.7	41.7
	nos.	4	42	27	20	10	103
King Trial	*%*	40.5	42.9	2.4	11.9	2.4	17.0
	nos.	17	18	1	5	1	42
Law & Order	*%*	-	14.3	33.3	33.3	19.0	8.5
	nos.		3	7	7	4	21
Ante. Cond.	*%*	-	23.5	17.6	35.3	23.5	6.9
	nos.		4	3	6	4	17
Reactions	*%*	-	18.8	31.3	12.5	37.5	6.5
to Riots	*nos.*		3	5	2	6	16
Other	*%*	-	13.3	40.0	33.3	13.3	6.1
	nos.		2	6	5	2	15
Reconstruc.	*%*	-	9.1	-	63.6	27.3	4.5
of LA	*nos.*		1		7	3	11
Calm	*%*	-	-	22.2	22.2	55.6	3.6
Returns	*nos.*			2	2	5	09
Resol. of	*%*	-	28.6	-	-	71.4	2.8
Rac. Ten.	*nos.*		2			5	07
LAPD	*%*	-	50.0	-	25.0	25.0	1.6
	nos.		2		1	1	04
Denny	*%*	-	50.0	-	-	50.0	0.8
Assault	*nos.*		1			1	02
Total	*%*	8.5	31.6	20.6	22.3	17.0	100.0
	nos.	21	78	51	55	42	247

Note. Chi Square (40, N=247) = 146.895 *p* < .0001

Table 2

Representation of Story Type by date in the LA Times Coverage

Story Type	Date					Total
	Apr. 30	May 1	May 2	May 3	May 4	
Hard News						
%	47.6	26.9	42.2	38.2	40.5	36.4
nos.	10	21	21	21	17	90
Comm./Ana.						
%	33.3	33.3	27.5	20.0	26.2	27.9
nos.	7	26	14	11	11	69
Human Int./Fea.						
%	4.8	6.4	11.8	12.7	19.0	10.9
nos.	1	5	6	7	8	27
Other						
%	14.3	33.3	19.6	29.1	14.3	24.7
nos.	3	26	10	16	6	61
Total						
%	8.5	31.6	20.6	22.3	17.0	100.0
nos.	21	78	51	55	42	247

Note. Chi Square (12, N=247) = 16.53 N.S.

Table 3

Representation of Length of Story by Date in the LA Times Coverage

Length/Column inches	Date					Total
	Apr. 30	May 1	May 2	May 3	May 4	
Total # of Stories	21	78	51	55	42	247
Total Length of Stories	868.0	2830.0	2795.0	2350.0	1982.0	10825.0
Average Length of Story	41.33	36.28	54.8	42.73	42.19	43.80
Median Length of Story	28.00	31.00	45.00	32.00	41.00	34.00
Minimum Length of Story	8.00	1.00	11.00	3.00	5.00	1.00
Maximum Length Story	118.0	190.0	143.0	196.0	127.0	196.0
Range in Length of Story	110.0	189.0	132.0	193.0	122.0	195.0

Table 4

Representation of Length of Stories by Story Type in the LA Times

Coverage (April 30 to May 4 1992)

Length/Column inches	Story Type				Total
	Hard News	Comm./Ana.	Hum.Int./Fea.	Other	
Total # of Stories	90	69	27	61	247
Total Length	4070.0	3175.0	1455.0	2125.0	10825.0
Average Length of Story	45.22	46.01	53.89	34.84	43.83
Minimum Length of Story	3.0	5.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Maximum Length of Story	196.0	190.0	143.0	126.0	196.0
Range in Length of Story	193.0	185.0	142.0	125.0	195.0

Table 5

Representation of Most Emphasized Topic by Photographs in the LA Times Coverage

Topic		Photographs		Total
		Yes	No	
Violence	%	47.6	52.4	41.7
	nos.	49	54	103
King	%	31.0	69.0	17.0
Trial	nos.	13	29	42
Law &	%	52.4	47.6	8.5
Order	nos.	11	10	21
Antecedent	%	23.5	76.5	6.9
Cond.	nos.	4	13	17
Reactions	%	37.5	62.5	6.5
to Riots	nos.	6	10	16
Other	%	33.3	66.7	6.1
	nos.	5	10	15
Reconstr .	%	45.5	54.5	4.5
of LA	nos.	5	6	11
Calm	%	88.9	11.1	3.6
Returns	nos.	8	1	09
Resol. of	%	57.1	42.9	2.8
Ra. Ten.	nos.	4	3	07
LAPD	%	50.0	50.0	1.6
	nos.	2	2	04
Denny	%	100.0	-	0.8
Assault	nos.	2		02
Total	%	44.1	55.9	100.0
	nos.	109	138	247

Note. Chi Square (10, N=247) = 18.34 $p < .05$

Table 6

Representation of News Sources Quoted by Date in the LA Times Coverage

Source (nos.)	Date					Total
	Apr. 30	May 1	May 2	May 3	May 4	
Others	11	31	26	20	10	98
LA Residents	7	16	14	16	14	67
Commu. Leaders	6	12	11	8	7	44
Store Owners	-	8	13	8	7	36
LA City Officials	4	11	8	2	5	30
Fed. Off./Spokes.	-	9	3	7	9	28
LAPD Off./Spokes.	6	12	4	3	2	27
Eye Witnesses	2	13	6	1	1	23
CA Residents	4	4	4	4	3	19
Opponents of LAPD	6	8	2	1	1	18
Riot Victims	1	8	6	1	2	18
Local Journalists	2	4	5	4	2	17
CA St. Off./Spokes.	-	4	5	1	4	14
Proponents of LAPD	7	3	1	2	-	13
Nat. Guard / Army	-	1	4	3	3	11
Fire fighters	1	4	3	2	-	10
Nat. /Intl. Jour.	3	2	2	-	2	09
State Prosecutors	2	1	-	1	2	06
Def. Att. Pol. Off	3	-	-	-	-	03

Note. N = 247

The total adds up to over 247 due to multiple news sources in one story.

Appendix I

Chronology of the Los Angeles Riots

Source: Facts on File

April 29, 1992.

* CA Superior court acquits the four police officers charged with the attack on Rodney King.

* Looting and rioting breaks out in South Central Los Angeles, reportedly killing a dozen people.

* LA Mayor Tom Bradley (D) declares a local state of emergency at 9 p.m.

* CA Governor Pete Wilson (R) orders the National Guard to report for duty to assist police.

* TV news cameras record beating of white truck driver Reginald Denny by rioters.

April 30

* A dusk-to-dawn curfew is imposed.

* Rioting and looting escalates. Seven reported killed.

* Bus service in the district is halted.

* LA Dodgers postpone baseball game against Phillies.

* Two people killed in Las Vegas in looting and arson. Nevada Governor Bob Miller (D) orders 400 National Guardsmen in to city, and city council declares a 7 p.m. to dawn curfew.

* Demonstration against verdict in Seattle.

* A peaceful demonstration in San Francisco turns into a riot damaging over a 100 businesses. Over 1,100 people arrested.

* Amnesty International calls for a full judicial inquiry into reports of "routine police brutality" in LA.

* President Bush announces that a Justice Department investigation to the verdict will be opened.

* Bill Clinton criticizes Bush's initial reticence on the acquittal but praises him for mobilizing federal troops.

May 1

- * Rioting and looting continues.
- * Violence breaks out in some other US cities such as Seattle.
- * Bush holds emergency White House meeting with civil rights leaders.
- * Bush addresses nation in a special televised speech and promises to restore order.
- * LA Dodgers postpone 3 day baseball series with Montreal Expos.
- * NBA playoff games moved to Las Vegas and Anaheim, CA.
- * San Francisco Giants baseball game postponed.
- * Public schools remain closed.
- * Bush orders 1,500 Marine and 3,000 Army Infantrymen to area. Troops have authority to shoot back if fired upon.
- * National Guard Troops ring shopping centers while residents and merchants clean up debris.
- * Armed National Guardsmen keep order around post offices in South Central LA while people collect social security and welfare checks.
- * Rodney King appeals for calm.
- * French President Mitterand blames riots on Bush's conservative economic policies.
- * South Korean President Roh Tae Woo asks for greater protection for Korean Americans.
- * Japanese newspaper "Asahi Shimbun" said that the "riots showed the rights of Black people are weak in the presence of the White majority."
- * Clinton condemns acquittal of officers and says he understood the violence. At the same time he called the riots the work of "lawless vandals."
- * Twenty eight fatalities reported.

May 2

- * Yumi Park, President of Korean American Retail Grocers Association announces damages to 600 Korean owned establishments in South Central LA and 200 in Koreatown.

- Mayor Bradley criticizes LA Police Commissioner Daryl Gates for delaying to seek help from state troops.

- South African newspaper the "Citizen" which represented white interests says that "Our advice to the US is : Sort out your own problems and leave us to sort out ours. As LA has shown, you are not a great example to us."

May 3

- Largest troop presence on streets with 1,100 Marines and 600 Army soldiers joining 6,500 National Guard Troops in city.

- China says that the riots reflected human rights violations and "serious racial discrimination in the US."

- Mayor Bradley announces the appointment of Peter V. Uberroth to head "Commission to Rebuild LA" to oversee restoration efforts to riot shattered areas.

- Bush meets with top domestic advisors to begin planning a response to the riots.

May 4

- LA District Attorney's office announces suspension of work on non-essential cases.

- District Attorney Ira Reiner announces plans to seek one-year jail terms for looters and longer sentences for destruction of property.

- The LA Police Commission begins gathering of facts about police response to riots.

- At the UN, Iraq asks for Emergency Security Council meeting to condemn human rights violations in the riots.

- Announcement of Federal Aid package of $100,000,000 in disaster aid to riot victims, $200,000,000 to rebuild damaged areas and $400,000,000 in loans from the Small Business Administration.

- LA Community Development Agency approves $200,000,000 in emergency relief for small businesses and homeowners.

- Bill Clinton visits riot torn areas, meets with Rep. Maxine Waters and other community leaders.

- Presidential spokesman Marlin Frizwater blames the riots on the so-called "Great Society anti-poverty programs of President Johnson in the 1960's.

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Perceptions of News Media Managers Toward Their Own Corporate Community Responsibility

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Perceptions of News Media Managers
Toward Their Own Corporate Community Responsibility

Introduction

Corporate Community Responsibility (CCR) is an elusive ideology that has not yet been reduced to a precise and unified definition (Wokutch, 1990). In a general sense, it is a responsibility businesses have that goes beyond the broad spectrum of activities and legal obligations associated with providing products and service.

The public is increasingly demanding that corporations acknowledge their role as corporate citizens and accept responsibility to help maintain and improve community welfare, in return for public trust placed in them. This trend is anticipated to continue for some time (Wokutch, 1990).

One business with a unique role in American society is the news media. Not only are the news media businesses with typical business concerns, they are also social observers watching over the affairs of the community (Bagdikian, 1972). Writing about the significance of the news media's responsibility, Bagdikian (1972) said:

> The ultimate question of corporate conflict of interest in the news media is whether news and commentary as a whole would be different if news corporations had no outside financial interests. And if different, whether it could come closer than it does today to the needed improvements in reporting and relevant commentary....If the news and its interpretation are increasingly merely

> a byproduct of huge corporations whose primary concern must be conventional gain, then it is not a minor matter in public information or in the development of social and fiscal policies. (p. 67)

Further, the journalists themselves serve as both objective observers of community affairs and subjective participants who take an active personal interest in their community. Burd (1978) pointed out that an unresolved journalistic dilemma is the marriage of newsroom policy and public good. It centers around the problem of journalism as both an objective observer reporting the news and a subjective participant influencing and shaping the news.

A current trend that makes this "marriage" of the news room and public good even more potentially significant is that news media executives are encouraging their news organizations to get even more involved in their communities. The logic surrounding this strategy is that readership/viewership will be enhanced because the public will see the news organization as an "essential political actor" in the community (Kaplan, 1992, p.48). Kaplan (1992) expressed his concern, as follows:

> We see such a movement leading newspapers to becoming cheerleaders for the establishment, writing only about the good things that happen and consciously ignoring information perceived as negative. (p. 48)

MacDougall (1968) disagreed with this conflict between news organizations as civic participants and independent observers. He argued that journalist activism not only has a long history but also that it is an important component of accuracy in reporting. This type of community involvement serves the reporter by providing more in-depth information as well as a richer understanding of the Methodology.

De Mott (1981) pointed out that with the freedoms given the news media in the First Amendment comes a "covenant" or responsibility between the news media and the public they serve. American society was founded on the underlying principle that a free press serves the public as a "fourth institution" that provides a source of information and a check on public affairs (Carter, 1959).

Studies, however, have shown that citizen expectations of the role the news media should play in communities may differ between communities. For example, residents of smaller, more rural communities generally believe that newspapers should be agents for promoting their communities, while residents of larger more metropolitan communities are more likely to be supportive of controversial information (Smith, 1984). Content analysis has shown that the reporting of social conflict has been heavier in the news media in metropolitan communities than in rural towns (Donohue & Tichenor, 1968). Similarly, surveys of editors and other community leaders in smaller communities have found that they feel the news media should play down conflict in favor of information that promotes community cohesion (Boynton & Wright, 1978).

Further, according to Altheide (1985), news that fits the format of a particular mass communication medium is more likely to get reported. Television news, for example, prefers stories that have a visual impact, provide drama or action, and can be compressed into a compact segment. Under these circumstances, conflict fits their format better than does peace.

Even the news reporting process itself can deliver a "mass-mediated reality" (Nimmo, 1990). "Mass-mediated" news is different from what would have been experienced if one had encountered the phenomenon firsthand (Altheide, 1985). This mediated experience is due in part to the media's ability to package the news through its gatekeeping functions and the way in which news is reported, i.e., slant, thoroughness of information being reported, angle, etc (Nimmo, 1990).

Research into the values of journalists has shown that their personal biases and values do influence their perception of reality. These values, in a sense, determine what information is contributed to the shared information base and distributed through the media (Rothman, 1982).

Walter Cronkite was once asked whether journalists were liberals, biased against established institutions. He replied that this was not the case; they merely tended "to side with humanity rather than with authority" (cited in Rothman, 1982, p.124).

Researchers in other fields have noted gaps in the research surrounding CCR. Thompson, Wartick, and Smith (1990) said, "Social issues in management suffer from a distinct big-business orientation" (p.1). Aupperle (1990) pointed out that there is no single methodology or approach that will define something as illusive as CCR. An understanding of the news media's view of their own responsibility to the communities they serve is important in assessing how they are performing their covenant with the American people (De Mott, 1981).

Statement of the Problem

1) What role do news media managers feel they should play in addressing community issues?

2) How do news media managers view their own community responsibility?

3) What level of agreement/disagreement do news media managers have concerning various attributes of good community citizenship ?

4) Do news media managers have editorial policies regarding their own community responsibility?

5) Are there differences in attitudes among newspaper managing editors, radio news directors, and television news directors toward their own community roles and responsibilities?

Methodology

This study surveyed the perceptions of managing editors at daily newspapers and news directors at radio and television news stations across the United States. The survey sample was selected utilizing the following criteria:

Newspapers–top-100 Area of Dominant Influence (ADI) daily newspaper markets. A total of 751 "Managing Editors" fit this category; after being sorted in descending order by market size, a sample of 73% or 548 of these names were randomly selected by eliminating every fourth name on the list.

Radio–top-100 ADI news/talk format radio station markets. A total of 496 "News Directors" fit this category; all were utilized.

Television–top-100 ADI television station markets. A total of 406 "News Directors" fit this category; all were utilized.

Data for assessing perceptions was collected through a four-page self-administered mail questionnaire comprised of both open-ended and closed-ended questions (see Appendix A). Of the 1,429 surveys that were delivered, 568 questionnaires were returned, yielding a total response rate of 39.7%. The margin of error was calculated as +/- 4.0%, at the 95% confidence level.

Of the 548 surveys sent to newspaper managing editors, 229 or about 42% responded; of the 496 surveys sent to radio news directors, 205 or about 41% responded; of the 406 surveys sent to television news directors, 137 or about 34% responded. A total of 46 states are represented in the study. Organizational news staffs ranged from 1 to 101, with about half having 10 or fewer. Market sizes ranged from populations of 50,000 to more than 2 million, with fairly even distribution throughout the various market sizes.

Survey results were organized under cross-tabulation banners that included the following variable information: total response, type of community, gender, type of news organization, and years of experience. The available data was run through these banners to establish frequencies and significance. Significance tests were applied to establish validity of variances.

A comparison of the demographics of the sample (e.g., market size, geographic location, response rate of each news medium) to the known survey population demographics, showed consistency between the sample and the population, which tends to add confidence that the results are an accurate representation of the population.

Findings

Demographics

More than half of the respondents have 16 or more years of experience. Newspaper managing editors tended to be the most experienced, with almost half listing more than 20. Radio news directors have the least experience, with almost half listing 10 or fewer years of experience. Experience among television news directors fell in the middle, with about one-third listing more than 20 years experience while 60.5% have 11-20 years of experience.

About three-fourths of the respondents are male, one-fourth female. An even higher percentage of men (83%) work in television than do women (16%). Males had significantly more work experience than did female respondents. Eighty-eight percent of the males had more than 20 years of experience, while about a third of the female respondents had 10 or fewer years; another fourth of the females had 11-15 years.

About half of the respondents considered themselves to have a moderate political orientation, with the remainder equally divided between conservative and liberal (see Table 1). Respondents from newspapers and television tended to lean toward being moderate, with more from radio considering themselves conservatives. A significantly higher number of women (27%) consider themselves liberal, while men lean toward being conservative. Further, two-thirds of those with more than 20 years of experience consider themselves moderates. Also of statistical significance is the finding that as experience increases so does the news managers' tendency to consider themselves moderates, while the tendency to consider themselves either liberal or conservative decreases.

News Media's Role in Community Issues

News managers were asked to relate the level of involvement they feel they should have in various community issues and problems: do nothing, report what's happening, get involved as a participant, and provide leadership in addressing issues and problems (see Table 2).

Virtually all (99.6%) of those responding believe news organizations should be involved in at least reporting one of the issues listed, 87.7% believe the news media should be a participant in addressing at least one of the issues, and 63.4% believe they should be a community leader in at least one of the issues.

About 10% said the only involvement the news media should have in any community issue is that of observing and reporting. Although this may be a relatively small group, these respondents have very strong feelings and convictions on this matter. Most of the individuals in this group took the time to write a note saying something similar to one respondent's note that said, "No news organization has responsibility to the community outside of observing and reporting."

Factors Influencing Community Responsibility

Anderson (1977) identified several dimensions that are essential in developing and maintaining a community responsibility orientation by the news media. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not important and 10 being very important, respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of these dimensions in influencing their news organization to be a responsible corporate citizen (see Figure 1).

The data make it clear that the most important factor influencing a community responsibility orientation for journalists is the journalists themselves. A journalist's professionalism (9.1) and sense of responsibility to serve the public's best interest (9.1) are the most significant factors. Respondents also suggested that journalists are somewhat responsive to criticism from the community (7.3).

The other factors--news organization's community responsibility, constitutional guarantees, journalist's personal community involvement, and criticism from other journalists--did not receive a strong response one way or the other. All three mediums surveyed were very much in agreement on the importance of the above factors.

Community Responsibility of the News Media and Other Businesses

Several questions dealt with the community responsibility of the news media compared to the community responsibility of other businesses and the influence business considerations have on news. These questions specifically sought to assess respondents' views on: a) whether or not all businesses have a responsibility to be actively involved in addressing community issues, b) whether or not the news media have a responsibility to be involved in community issues, c) how the responsibility of the news media compares to the responsibility of other businesses, d) what the factors/reasons are for community responsibility of the news media are, and e) what influence business considerations have on the news decision-making process.

Business vs. news media citizenship. News managers held a strong belief that all businesses should be actively involved in addressing issues and problems in their communities. In total, 92.6% of all respondents believe that businesses have a responsibility to be actively involved in addressing community issues; 7.4% believed they do not.

An even greater percentage of respondents agreed (96.2%) that the news media have a responsibility to be involved in addressing community issues. The belief that the news media should be actively involved in addressing community issues was further supported by the fact that more than three-fourths of the managers believed the news media have more of a responsibility than other community businesses to be actively involved in addressing community issues (see Figure 2). One-fifth said they believe the news media have about the same responsibility, and only 2% said they have less. Newspaper managing editors had the highest percentage (82.8%) of belief that the news media have more of a responsibility to get involved in addressing community issues than to not get involved.

Reasons for the news media's community responsibility. When respondents were asked why they answered the way they did regarding their level of responsibility compared to other businesses, they identified 10 factors/reasons that established the foundation for their beliefs in the news media's community responsibility (see Table 3).

One-fourth indicated they have a responsibility to the community because of the surveillance function (community watchdog) of the news media. About another fifth said it was because of their information dissemination function.

The high profile/visibility nature of the news media (16.1%) and their ability to influence/set agendas (14.5%) were also recognized as important reasons for their responsibility to the communities.

Other responses emerged suggesting a slightly different news media community responsibility orientation. Those responses indicate the news media's responsibility is: a) the same as every other citizen/business (16.7%), b) to point out the problems but not solve them (6.2%), and c) to not become part of the news because it is a conflict of interest (3.1%).

Business influence on community responsibility. Aupperle (1990) identified four specific areas of business operations: economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary. To assess the importance of these influences on community responsibility, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement (on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not important and 10 being very important) with certain statements reflecting the four areas identified by Aupperle (see Figure 3).

Ethical standards received the highest mean score (8.5); philanthropic/charitable (7.0) and legal expectations (6.8) were rated toward the middle of the other two factors, and maximizing profit was the least important factor (4.2) (see Figure 3).

Business influence on news content. In determining news content, many factors can influence the decision-making process. There is no escaping the fact that news organizations are a business enterprise. As with any business, certain basic factors influence its operation. Aupperle (1990) identified four specific areas of business operations: economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary. To assess the importance of business factors on determining news content respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement (on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not important and 10 being very important) with certain statements reflecting the four areas identified by Aupperle (see Figure 4).

Respondents indicated that the overriding business factor influencing news content is ethics (mean of 7.2 on a scale of 1-10). This is consistent with the findings that the most important influence in determining community responsibility is ethical norms (see Figure 3) and the most important attribute in defining community responsibility for businesses is having fair and ethical business practices (discussed later, see Table 4).

Legal considerations (5.8) were the next highest factor listed, followed by philanthropic/charitable (4.9). Maximizing earnings received the lowest score of agreement (3.8). The score concerning profitability of businesses, however, is inconsistent with that reported below regarding attributes of citizenship (see Table 4).

Attributes of Corporate Community Citizenship

Respondents were asked their level of agreement/disagreement concerning 10 attributes that make a company or business a good citizen of the community (see Table 4). The attributes grouped into three levels of support: high 90%s, low 90%s, and 70%.

In the highest level, respondents were most likely to suggest that a company or business is a good citizen of the community if it demonstrates: having fair/ethical business practices, being concerned about customers, being environmentally responsible, addressing community issues, and providing reliable products and services. These five attributes were perceived as being about equal in importance to a company's being a good community citizen, with each attribute having at least 98.9% agree that it is important.

The second level of attribute support linked to describing a business' community responsibility include: making corporate contributions, encouraging employee volunteerism, keeping prices reasonable, and encouraging economic development. These activities were perceived about equal in importance, each having between 94.2%-95.9% agreeing.

The third level of attribute support, which dealt with business profitability, received much lower (70.7% agree) support than the other two levels. Although profitability was significantly lower than the other attributes, there is still a recognition by the majority that profitability is important to community responsibility.

Community Responsibility Editorial Policy

One-third (31.7%) of the news media managers indicated their news organization has an editorial policy regarding the reporting of community issues or conflicts. About 6 in 10 (61.8%) said their organizations did not have one. Radio was the most likely (36.1%) to have a policy, while television was the least likely (25.5%).

Of those who had editorial policies, more than two-thirds (68.9%) indicated their policies are unwritten. A little more than one-fourth (27.2%) had written policies. Written and unwritten policies were fairly evenly divided among the three media.

When asked to briefly explain their policies, respondents identified 9 categories that establish the basis for their policies: a) accuracy, b) responsiveness to community needs/expectations, c) journalist bias, d) public access for rebuttle, e) thoroughness, f) empathy, g) leadership on issues, h) intentionally provoking public, and i) journalist involvement in news story (see Table 5). Newspaper and radio policies mostly addressed the accuracy area, while television policies primarily addressed responsiveness to community needs/expectations.

More than half (56%) of the policies originated from general managers and news directors. Responding managing editors and news directors accounted for 40.0% of those policies, while another 16% came from previous general managers and news directors. One-fourth of the policies came from management committees.

Other originating sources for policies included other managers (7.2%), publishers (1.7%), owners (1.1%), and staff members (1.1%). About 7% didn't know where the policy originated. Of those who had policies, 88.9% agreed with their policies and .6% disagreed; 10.6% had no opinion or didn't answer.

Differences in Attitudes among Newspaper Managing Editors, Radio News Directors, and Television News Directors

There was considerable agreement among views of responding news managers from newspapers, radio, and television. However, a few significant differences did emerge in the research. Newspapers tended to have the largest news staffs, the most experienced journalists, and a higher-than-average number of men working in the news organizations.

Respondents from radio had the least-experienced staffs, and a significantly higher number considered themselves politically conservative. Newspaper managing editors and television news directors tended to lean heavily toward political moderation.

Radio news directors were the least supportive of either business or news media getting involved in community issues; newspaper managing editors were the most supportive. Radio was the most likely to have a community responsibility-oriented editorial policy, while television was the least likely.

Discussion

Community Roles and Responsibilities

Involvement in community issues. There are various roles and levels of involvements the news media may have in a community. Burd (1978) pointed out that the marriage of newsroom policy and public good is a major unresolved journalistic dilemma. It centers around the problem of journalism as both an objective observer and a subjective participant.

This research identified a strong belief among managing editors and news directors that businesses and the news media should be actively involved in addressing issues and problems in their communities. About 93% of the respondents believe that businesses have a responsibility to be actively involved in addressing community issues. An even higher percentage (96.2%) believe that the news media have a responsibility to be involved in addressing community issues.

The belief that the news media should be actively involved in addressing community issues is further supported by the fact that more than three-fourths believe the news media have more of a responsibility than other community businesses to be actively involved.

Reasons for level of media's community responsibility: When news managers were asked the reasons for their responses regarding the media's level of community responsibility compared to other businesses, they provided 10 factors/reasons that establish a foundation for their beliefs about the news media's community responsibility: surveillance function, information dissemination function, equal responsibility for all, high profile, ability to influence and set agendas, identification of problems not resolution, community sponsorship/support, no involvement in issues, FCC requirements (legal expectations), and public airways. As might be expected, the surveillance function emerged as a significant reason for this responsibility as did the information dissemination function, both of which are the most important functions the news media feel they have in their communities.

Level of community involvement. Virtually all of the respondents believe news organizations should be involved in at least reporting every one of the issues listed, almost 9 in 10 indicating that the news media should be a participant in addressing at least one of the issues, and about 6 in 10 indicating they should be a community leader in at least one of the issues.

When looking at the specific issues listed, the traditional surveillance function emerged as an important duty of the news media, with almost half believing that the news media should take a leadership role in exposing government corruption. These findings show strong support for the news media taking an active role in addressing community issues.

No involvement in community issues. It should also be noted that a segment of the respondents (10%) believe there should be no news media involvement in community affairs beyond observing and reporting the news. When asked their views regarding community responsibility of the news media, this group of respondents warn that the news media's responsibility is to point out problems but not solve them, i.e., to not become part of the news because it would be a conflict of interest.

The juxtaposition of the attitudes of this group to the attitudes of those who feel the news media should be involved in addressing community issues suggests that the journalistic dilemma between the marriage of newsroom policy and public good that Burd (1978) described is still unresolved.

Community Responsibility Attributes

Respondents' ranking of 10 attributes that make a company or business a good citizen of the community suggest that news managers judge a business's citizenship first by how it treats its customers: fair and ethical business practices, concern for customers, reliable products and services. Slightly less important to these news mangers' descriptions of a business's citizenship is its relationship to the community: making corporate contributions, encouraging employee volunteerism, and encouraging economic development.

Similarly, respondents were asked to define community responsibility utilizing the four areas of business operations identified by Aupperle (1990): economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary. Ethical standards again ranked the highest, while philanthropic/charitable expectations were toward the middle.

Community Responsibility Editorial Policies

The news reporting process can deliver a "mass-mediated reality" (Nimmo, 1990) of a community issue that may or may not adequately represent the conflict. To get a better understanding of how news organizations are addressing this issue, respondents were asked about their community responsibility editorial policies.

One-third of the respondents indicated their news organization has no editorial policy regarding the reporting of community issues or conflicts. Of those who have an editorial policy, one-third indicated it was an unwritten policy. When asked to briefly explain their policies, respondents identified 9 categories that establish the basis for their policies. These policies provide some insight into the concerns of those making the policies: a) accuracy, b) responsiveness to community needs/expectations, c) journalist bias, d) public access for rebuttle, e) thoroughness, f) empathy, g) leadership on issues, h) intentionally provoking public, and i) journalist involvement in news story. Policies from Newspaper and radio mostly address accuracy, while television policies primarily address responsiveness to community expectations.

The editorial policy category most often cited deals with the issue of quality reporting, ensuring stories are accurate and balanced. This may indicate a recognition by respondents that the news reporting process can deliver a mediated reality of a controversy and are attempting to address it through administrative policy.

The second most frequently identified category of editorial policies identified in this study deals with being responsive to "anything deemed of value/concern to the community." This may be cause for some concern because it tends to support the social maintenance model discussed earlier in this report that suggests community structure is an important element in determining news content. The tendency to report what the community wants or expects could create a situation that greatly impacts the type of information that gets reported, how it is represented by the news media, and the amount of space allocated it in the media.

Attitudes of Newspaper, Radio, and Television News Mangers

For the most part, attitudes of newspapers, radio, and television gatekeepers are in agreement. However, a few significant differences were identified in the research. Radio news directors, for example, with the least-experienced staffs and higher number considering themselves conservatives, are the least supportive of either business or news media getting involved in community issues. The finding that radio was the most likely to have a community responsibility-oriented editorial policy could be an indication that radio recognizes its inexperience and is compensating through administrative policy.

Respondents from television news were much likelier than newspaper respondents to identify crime/violence/drugs as serious community problems; these problems are also among the most visually oriented. On the other hand, respondents from newspapers more frequently listed housing/growth/development as the most important issues in the community, which are among the most analytically-oriented issues. This tends to support Rothman's (1985) theory that news fitting the format of a particular news medium is more likely to get reported.

Rothman (1982) concluded that news media have a more liberal and social outlook than either business leaders or the general public. This tendency could have an impact on how information is interpreted. The results of this survey, however, show that about half of the newspaper managing editors and radio and television news directors consider themselves moderates, with the remainder being equally divided between conservatives and liberals.

Regardless of where these respondents actually fall in terms of their political orientation, the fact is that they view themselves primarily as moderates. The finding that as experience increases among journalists so does the tendency to consider oneself a moderate while the tendency to consider oneself a liberal or conservative goes down suggests that journalists' perception of their own political orientation is influenced in part by their professional orientation. This finding also suggests that avoiding conscience bias is not enough, news media managers must still deal with unconscious bias.

Recommendations

The results of this survey point to several opportunities for future studies. Virtually all of the respondents support the news media getting involved in community issues. More than three-fourths believe the news media have more of a responsibility in the community than other community businesses. Further, about two-thirds indicated the news media should be community leaders in at least one of the community issues listed. With such strong acceptance, this belief in community involvement seems of great importance.

Some of the questions that must be addressed in assessing the significance of the news media's involvement are: a) What form does this involvement take, e.g., calling attention, involvement, or leadership in the issue itself? b) What effects does this involvement have on the news reporting process? c) What effects does this involvement have on the community? and d) How different is an event from what it would have been had the news media not been involved in addressing the issue?

Another area of study could be that of the news media's responsiveness to "anything deemed of value/concern to the community." Being responsive to community expectations and needs is an important principle in fulfilling the news media's covenant with the public and an important principle in journalist professionalism. The problem is that public expectations differ between larger and smaller communities, as does the type of news that get reported in those communities. A tendency to report only what the community wants or expects could create a situation that heavily influences the type of information that gets reported, how it is represented by the media, and the amount of space or air time allotted it in the media.

Since the scope of this study focused only on managing editors and news directors, the ability to generalize the results is limited to those specifically targeted in this study and not the entire population of news journalists. Other studies should examine other news professionals' attitudes.

The final area suggested for research deals with the unique role the news media play in American society. Not only are the news media businesses with typical business concerns, but also they are social observers watching over the affairs of the community. Future studies should further investigate what impacts the business and administrative aspects of the news media have on the news reporting side.

Two of the survey questions did attempt to assess the importance of business concerns in the development of news content. Although the results indicated respondents feel these business concerns have some impact on news development, the intent of these questions was to get a basic indication about the relationship between business concerns and news reporting. Future studies should conduct an in-depth analysis of this relationship, possibly through a trade-off analysis or forced-choice procedure.

Aupperle (1990) pointed out that it is only through multiple methodologies and investigations that researchers will ever hope to better understand something as illusive as community responsibility. This survey was one attempt to assess how newspaper managing editors, radio news directors, and television news directors view their community roles and responsibilities.

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Appendix A

Survey Cover Letter and Questionnaire

DAVID A. OLSEN
P.O. Box 67031
Phoenix, AZ 85082-7031
(602) 973-4367

February 5, 1993

Dear Journalist:

You have been selected to take part in a national study on the attitudes of the news media toward community responsibility. This study is being conducted as part of my graduate studies in the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Telecommunication at Arizona State University.

Your selection to participate was part of a random sampling of newspaper, radio and television journalists. Consequently, your responses to the enclosed questionnaire are extremely important, as they are representative of other journalists throughout the United States.

The questionnaire should only take about 15 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers; I am only interested in your attitudes and opinions. Let me also assure you that all responses will be kept in strict confidence. **Your completed questionnaire should be returned by February 19.**

As a thank-you for participating in the survey, I would be happy to send you a complimentary copy of the results. To receive a copy, simply complete the enclosed self-addressed postcard and mail it back separately from your questionnaire. In this way, your name will in no way be linked to your responses.

I very much appreciate your help and cooperation in this study.

Sincerely,

David A. Olsen

David A. Olsen
Master of Mass Communication Candidate
Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Telecommunication
Arizona State University

DAO/rm

Enclosures

Community Responsibility Survey
—Conducted Among News Media—

Instructions: Please indicate your responses by circling the number corresponding to your opinion or by writing in your response in the space provided. Return your completed survey this week in the return envelope provided.

1. Overall, how would you rate your community as a place to live for people in general?

   1. Excellent   2. Good   3. Fair   4. Poor   (1)

2. In your opinion, what are the two or three most serious problems or issues facing your community today?

   1. ______________________________

   2. ______________________________

   3. ______________________________   (2-4)

3. What makes a company or business a good community citizen? Please circle the number that best reflects how you personally feel.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	No Opinion	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
a. Encouraging employees to volunteer in the community	1	2	3	4	5	(5)
b. Making corporate contributions	1	2	3	4	5	(6)
c. Being concerned about its customers	1	2	3	4	5	(7)
d. Keeping prices reasonable	1	2	3	4	5	(8)
e. Being environmentally responsible	1	2	3	4	5	(9)
f. Having fair and ethical business practices	1	2	3	4	5	(10)
g. Taking an active role in addressing community needs	1	2	3	4	5	(11)
h. Encouraging businesses to locate in the community	1	2	3	4	5	(12)
i. Providing reliable products and services	1	2	3	4	5	(13)
j. Being as profitable as possible	1	2	3	4	5	(14)

4. Some people have suggested that part of good community citizenship for businesses is being actively involved in addressing community needs. In your opinion, do businesses have a responsibility to be actively involved in addressing community needs?

   1. Yes   2. No   3. No opinion   (15)

5. Do the news media have a responsibility to be actively involved in addressing community needs?

   1. Yes   2. No   3. No opinion   (16)

6A. Compared to other community businesses, do the news media have:

1. More of a community responsibility than other businesses
2. Less of a community responsibility than other businesses
3. About the same community responsibility as other businesses (17)

6B. Why did you answer 6A the way you did?______________________________

____

______________________________ (18)

7. What level of involvement do you think your news organization should provide in the following areas: (Circle any or all of the levels that apply for each area)

	No Involvement at All	Observation & Reporting	Community Participant	Community Leader	
a. Improving water and air quality	0	1	2	3	(19)
b. Education reform	0	1	2	3	(20)
c. Protecting the environment	0	1	2	3	(21)
d. Art and cultural enhancements	0	1	2	3	(22)
e. Encouraging businesses to locate in the community	0	1	2	3	(23)
f. Crime prevention	0	1	2	3	(24)
g. Civic round tables	0	1	2	3	(25)
h. Substance abuse prevention	0	1	2	3	(26)
i. Family and youth services	0	1	2	3	(27)
j. Basic human needs, such as food and shelter	0	1	2	3	(28)
k. Defusing racial tensions	0	1	2	3	(29)
l. Needs of special groups, such as seniors and disabled	0	1	2	3	(30)
m. Exposing government corruption	0	1	2	3	(31)

8. How important are each of the following functions or services provided by your news organization: (Using a scale of 1-10, as follows):

Scale: 1 = not important, 10 = very important

a. Surveillance—watching over the affairs of the community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	(32)
b. Education—increasing general knowledge and literacy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	(33)
c. Entertainment—providing amusement and diversion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	(34)
d. Information dissemination—selection and interpretation of community matters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	(35)
e. Socialization—teaching and reinforcing community values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	(36)

9. There are many forces that act upon the news media to encourage them to be more responsible to the community. How important is each of the following in influencing your news organization to be a responsible corporate citizen:

Scale: 1 = not important, 10 = very important

a. Overall professionalism of the journalist	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(37)
b. Criticism from other journalists	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(38)
c. Criticism from the public	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(39)
d. A sense of responsibility of the journalist to serve the public's best interest	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(40)
e. Journalist's personal involvement as a participant in community affairs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(41)
f. News organization involvement as a participant in community affairs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(42)
g. Government pressure to abide by Constitutional guarantees of a free press	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(43)

10. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement by circling the number that best represents your opinion.

Scale: 1 = not important, 10 = very important

10A. It is important when determining news content to perform in a manner consistent with:

a. Expectations of your news organization for maximizing earnings	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(44
b. Expectations of government and the law	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(45
c. Expectations of societal philanthropic and charitable needs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(46
d. Expectations of societal standards and ethical norms	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(47

10B. It is important that good community citizenship be defined as . . .

a. Doing what the law expects	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(48
b. Providing voluntary assistance to charities and community organizations	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(49
c. Doing what is expected morally and ethically	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(50
d. Being as profitable as possible	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(51

10C. It is important when developing news content to . . .

a. Wait for perfectly clear community signals and patterns	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(5
b. Wait for relatively clear community signals and patterns	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(5
c. Look for weak signals and early patterns	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(5

11. Does your news organization have an editorial policy regarding the reporting of community issues or conflicts?

1. Yes   2. No   3. Don't know   *(If "no," skip to Question 16)*   (55)

12. If you answered yes to 11, is the policy . . .

1. Written 2. Unwritten (56)

Briefly explain that policy:

____ (57)

____ (58)

13. Who originated the editorial/coverage policy?

1. You 2. Management committee 3. A previous news director/managing editor

4. Other *(specify)*______________________________ (59)

14. Do you agree with the policy? 1. Yes 2. No 3. No opinion (60)

15. If you answered "no" to Question 14, briefly explain why you disagree with the policy:

____ (61)

____ (62)

The following questions are for classification purposes only:

16. The State in which your news organization is located:________________________ (63)

17. 1. Size of your market area ____________ 2. Size of professional news staff ____________ (64, 65)

18. Which of the following best describes the type of community(ies) you serve (circle all that apply):

1. Rural community 3. Liberal community
2. Metropolitan community 4. Conservative community (66, 67, 68, 69)

19. Your years of experience in news organizations:

1. 0—1 2. 2—5 3. 6—10 4. 11—15 5. 16—20 6. More than 20 (70)

20. Do you consider yourself to be politically . . .

1. Conservative 2. Liberal 3. Moderate 4. No response (71)

21. Your age: 1. Under 25 2. 25—34 3. 35—44 4. 45—59 5. 60 or older (72)

22. Your gender: 1. Female 2. Male (73)

23. Type of news organization: 1. Newspaper 2. Radio 3. Television (74)

24. *(For newspapers only):* What is your total circulation?________________________ (75)

If you would like a copy of the survey results sent to you, be sure to complete the enclosed postcard and return it separately from your questionnaire. All responses will be held in strict confidence. Your completed questionnaire should be returned this week.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Appendix B

Tables

Table 1
Years of Experience and Journalists' Perceived Political Orientation
(Mean Averages)

Years of News Media Experience	% Moderate	% Liberal	% Conservative	% No Response
0 to 10	42.9	21.2	19.2	16.7
11 to 15	53.9	18.3	15.7	12.2
16 to 20	61.5	17.4	11.0	10.1
More than 20	64.0	10.2	11.3	14.5
Total	55.5	16.2	14.4	13.9

n=568

Table 2
Level of News Media Involvement in Community Issues *

Issues	None	Observe/ Report	Parti-cipate	Lead**	Average Rating***
Exposing government corruption	.5	98.9	53.0	44.4	3
Defusing racial tensions	.7	98.2	59.9	31.5	2.9
Civic round tables	1.9	97.4	69.7	30.5	3
Education reform	0	99.0	47.9	23.2	2.7
Crime prevention	0	99.5	55.3	19.9	2.8
Substance abuse prevention	.7	98.8	55.8	18.8	2.7
Protecting the environment	.2	98.8	49.3	16.5	2.7
Special group--seniors/disabled	.4	99.1	49.8	15.5	2.7
Basic needs--food/shelter	1.0	97.7	49.8	15.0	2.6
Family & youth services	.9	98.6	47.7	14.4	2.6
Art & cultural enhancement	2.6	96.5	51.9	14.3	2.6
Economic development	12.1	88.2	32.6	12.9	2.3
Improving water/air quality	.7	98.8	31.7	12.3	2.4

n=568

* The survey question (#7) was: "What level of involvement do you think your news organization should provide in the following areas?"

** Listed in descending order for Lead

*** Average Rating Scale:

1=No Involvement at all
2=Observation/Reporting
3=Community Participant
4=Community Leader

Table 3
Reasons for Community Responsibility of the News Media
(Volunteered)

Factors/Reasons	%
Serve as watchdogs of the community	24.6
People look to the media for information	19.2
Every citizen/business has equal responsibility	16.7
Media have high profile/able to reach whole community	16.1
Media has power to influence people/set local agenda	14.5
Media must point out problems, not solve them	6.2
Expectations higher because media exist solely on support of community	5.0
News media should not become part of the news/conflict of interest	3.1
Required by federal license/FCC law	2.5
The public owns the airwaves, using them is a privilege	1.2
Other	2.5
Don't know	2.7

n=516

Table 4
Attributes that Make a Company/Business a Good Community Citizen

Attributes of Good Citizenship	% Agree	% Disagree	n=
Having fair/ethical business practices	99.9	.2	563
Being concerned about its customers	99.8	.2	553
Being environmentally responsible	99.4	.6	545
Actively addressing community needs	99.1	.9	540
Providing reliable products & services	98.9	1.1	537
Keeping prices reasonable	95.9	4.2	506
Making corporate contributions	95.8	4.3	522
Encouraging employee volunteerism	95.5	4.5	524
Encouraging economic development	94.2	5.8	481
Being as profitable as possible	70.7	29.3	468

Table 5
Explanation of Community Responsibility Editorial Policy (Volunteered)

Elements of Editorial Policy	%
Reporting should be responsible, accurate, balanced, fair/informative from a variety of perspectives.	35.3
Reporting anything deemed of value/concern to the community.	29.5
Not editorializing/not putting personal opinions into a story.	9.6
Opportunity for rebuttal given to all sides of an issue.	7.1
Having all the facts of a story before printing.	5.1
Using sensitivity in reporting on controversial issues to avoid inflaming tensions	5.1
Providing leadership in the community/reporting on problems and suggesting possible solutions.	4.5
Editorializing or injecting personal opinions into a story to provoke a reaction and response.	4.5
No reporter may be involved or connected with a group or activity he or she is covering/no conflict of interest.	3.2
Other	3.8
Don't know	14.7

n=156

Appendix C

Figures

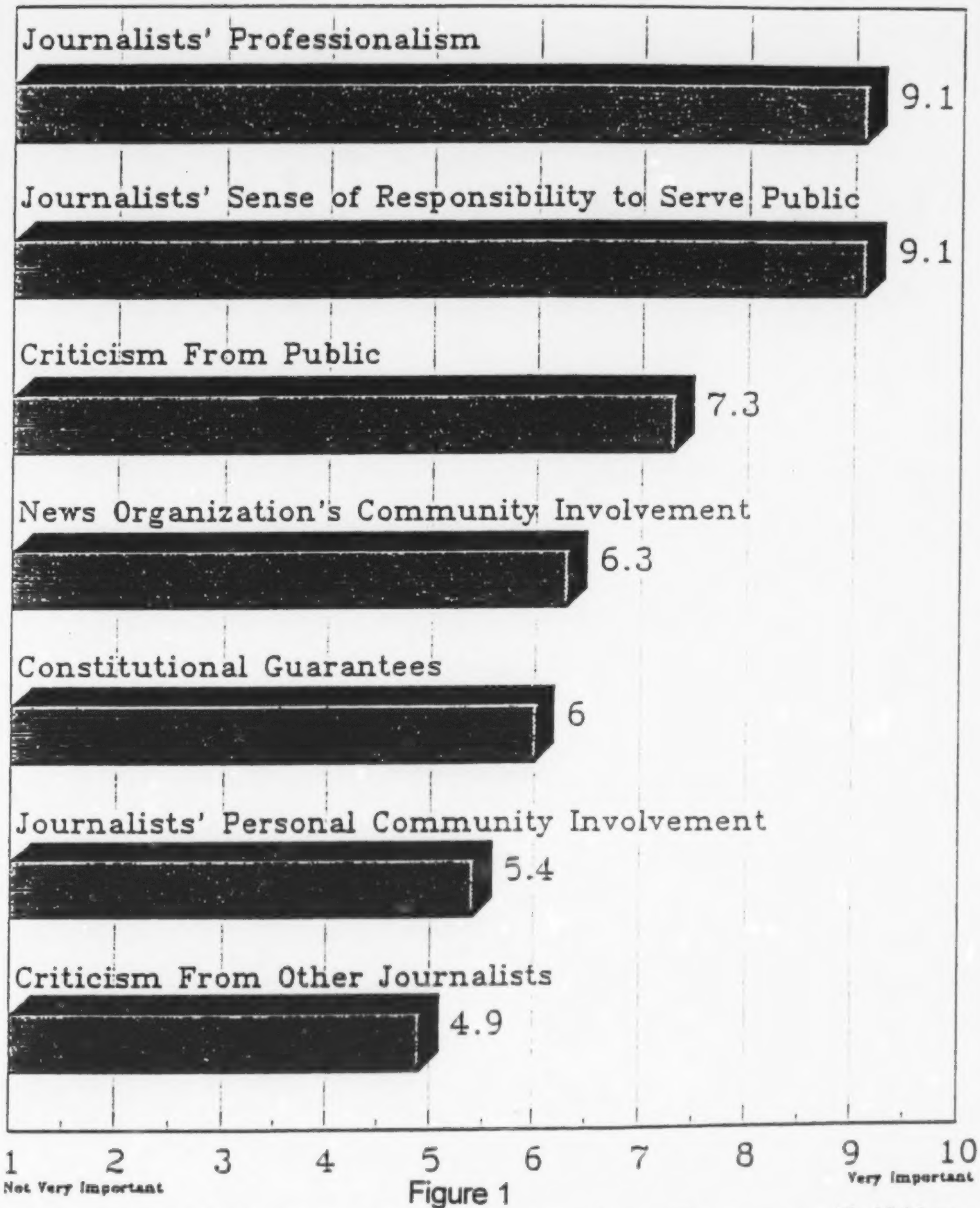

Figure 1

Factors Influencing Community Responsibility of Journalists

(Mean averages on a 10-point scale.)

n=568

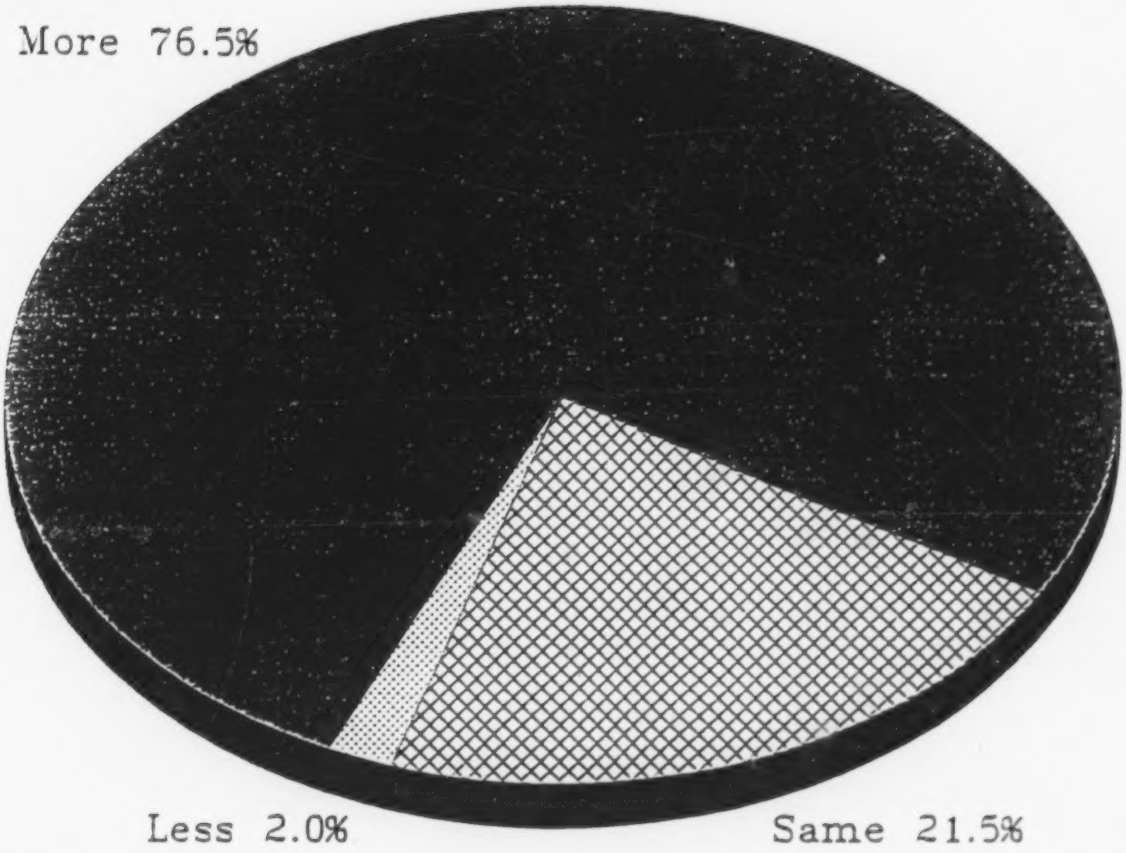

Figure 2
Level of News Media Community Responsibility Compared to Other Businesses
n=559

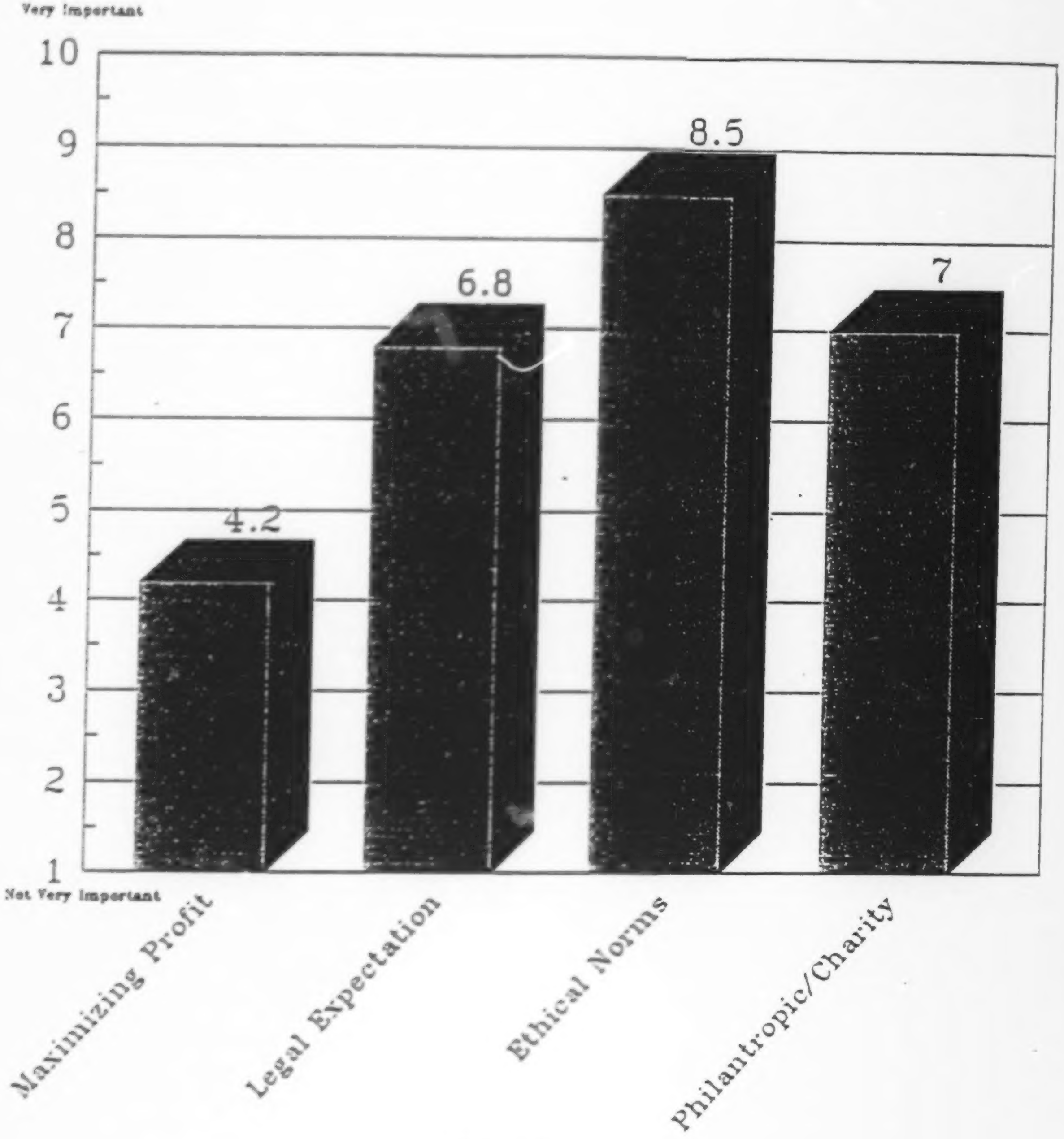

Figure 3

Influence of Business Factors on Defining Good Community Citizenship

(Mean averages on a 10-point scale.)

n=568

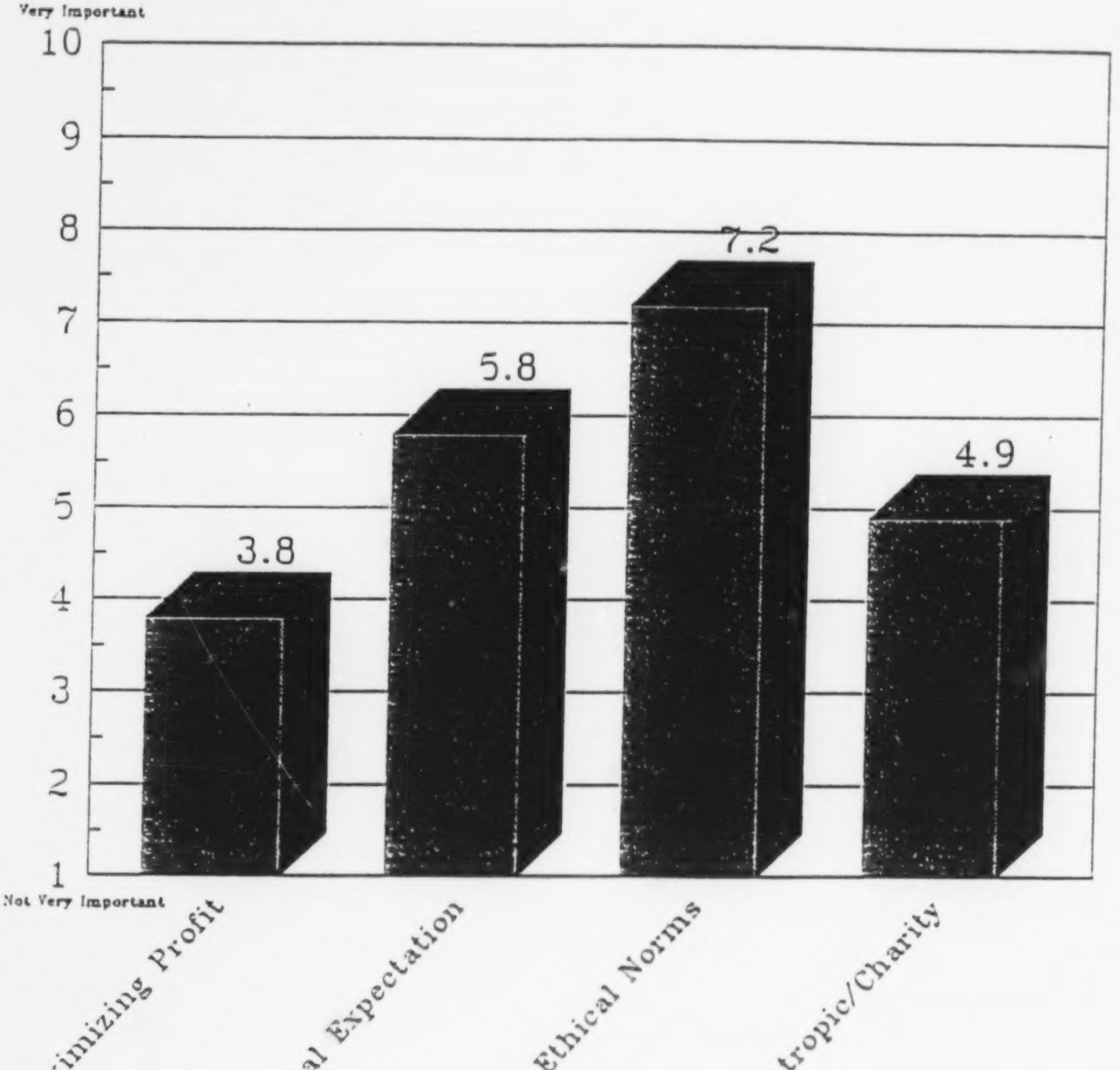

Figure 4

Influence of Business Factors on News Content
(Mean averages on a 10-point scale.)

n=568

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Personalization of the News and Burke's Notion of Circumference:
A Case Study of Press Coverage of the "Navajo Flu"

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1994 AEJMC Convention
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Running Head: NAVAJO FLU

Personalization of the News and Burke's Notion of Circumference: A Case Study of Press Coverage of the "Navajo Flu"

Attempting to communicate the news, the press covers and reaches a diverse population in the United States. That those who cover the news must deal with people from different cultures is not surprising. What is astounding is the lack of multi-cultural understanding that still exists in news coverage. As journalists have attempted to become sensitive to their biases, extrinsic racism seems to have diminished over time. Efforts have been made in trade and academic journals and continue to be made that encourage the improvement of cross-cultural coverage (i.e., Steffens, Special Report: Ethics, 1993; McGowan, 1993; Terry, 1993). However, the roots of racism run deep. Despite its benign face, intrinsic racism as defined by Appiah (1990) implies an inferior moral status and is difficult for the oppressed group to refute. This intrinsic rather than extrinsic racism appears to be at the core of much that is reported by the predominantly white press. While news accounts involving issues of diversity may seem unbiased and innocuous on a superficial level, a deeper analysis of the discourse of journalists reveals troubling racial and ethnic prejudices. In the case of the Hantavirus that claimed the lives of residents in the Southwest in May and June, 1993, an examination of the press' treatment reveals an implicit racism that perpetuates social exclusion of the Navajo nation from the dominant culture.

How racist tendencies can be reduced is suggested by Goldberg (1990), who like Appiah, suggests that racism appears at a deep, structural level. Goldberg proposes that strategies for eliminating racism not be limited to the language of racial discourse. He also advocates eliminating the obvious socioeconomic inequities and radically altering subjective practice. By this he means that racial exclusion is based on establishing racial otherness both in our discourse and in our thinking. The next section of the paper explores how racist thinking is embedded in news stories.

Personalization of the news and racism

One of the ways in which the intrinsic racism manifests itself is through the personalization of the news. Increasingly, news is presented through stories of private lives (Bennett, 1988). As a result of personalization of a large social issue, such as the cause of a mysterious and deadly disease, the audience might over generalize what it knows about the problem. Rather than seeing the personalization as an isolated instance, readers might be led (or misled) by the writer to interpret and connect the story to a broader cultural level. While the audience might only see a fragment of a deeper issue, readers might form a stereotype with the assumption that the problem characterizes not only the individual, but the race or group. Paradoxically, it is conceivable that the sterotyping that is generated by the personalization of the news has the effect of making cultural problems appear impersonal rather than individual. Instead of projecting a personal account of a larger news story, the account ends up stereotyping a group in an impersonal manner. I believe this is the case with the news coverage of the Hantavirus. Even if it were unintentional, the press identified the Hantavirus with the Navajo people, which resulted in offensive implications that the Indians were responsible somehow for contracting the disease.

The Hantavirus and Burke's notion of circumference

By mid-June 1993 the news media reported that an unexplained, yet deadly illness struck with alarming swiftness, killing at least eleven people in the American Southwest (i.e., Crowley, 1993, June 14; Toufexis, 1993, June 14). Early reports indicated that the majority of the cases involved Navajos living on reservations in the desert lands of New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. The mysterious disease attracted much attention from both broadcast and print journalists. Navajos claimed the ensuing coverage resulted in discrimination against their people (Gassaway, 1993). To understand this intrinsic racism better, I apply Kenneth Burke's concept of circumference to explicate the relationship between personalization of the news and the perpetuation of racism through the ignorance of cultural issues.

I contend that discrimination can be observed in two ways as suggested by Appiah (1990), through the language and through the conceptualizations of issues by reporters. Journalists used the term 'Navajo' to define the circumference of the mysterious disease. The emphasis on the people rather than the illness resulted in the perpetuation of superficial coverage and negative stereotypes of the Navajo tribe. The notion that reporters are merely conduits for transmitting information (agencies in Burkeian terms) is too simple. In acting as agencies for reporting the story, writers transform the scene. The commitment to personalization, for instance, changes the whole meaning of the "Navajo flu." The scene is of secondary importance. The assumption that reporters are simply agencies is insufficient for understanding reporters' interpretations of the news and needs to be reconsidered. Examining parts of Burke's pentad -- the act, the agent, the agency, the purpose and the scene -- in relationship to the circumferences of "news covered" and the "news coverers" gives a Burkeian interpretation to the act of discrimination by the press. To illustrate how I have come to the conclusion that reporters perpetuate intrinsic racism conceptually through their personalizations of the story and their use of language, I will define Burke's terms, then apply the terms to this dramatistic situation, first examining the news coverage, then focusing on the news gatherers.

News coverage and circumference

Simply put, circumference refers to the concept of "defining by location" (Burke, 1945, p. 77). Burke argues that the definition of circumference of a text influences the interpretation of the act, the agent, and ultimately the motives of the agent. If the scope of the circumference leads to an interpretation that a subject and its relationship with an act is prominent, an agent-act ratio prevails. Alternately, if the location is emphasized, a scene-act ratio is revealed. In the case of the Hantavirus story, reporters defined the scene sometimes by people and sometimes by location. Generally, the non-Native American media explicitly defined the disease by the people, emphasizing an agent-act ratio. A headline in *USA Today* labeled it "Navajo Flu," *The Arizona Republic* called it the "Navajo epidemic," and NBC News referred to the "Navajo disease" (Gassaway, 1993, p. 24). The account of the disease in *Newsweek* even featured a map pinpointing cases where the outbreak occurred (Cowley, 1993, June, p. 30). By contrast, a *Navajo Times* newspaper report referred to the mysterious disease by location (a scene-act ratio), calling it "the Four Corners area illness," rather than identifying it with the tribe ("IHS doctors," 1993). The point is this: the non-Native American media explicitly defined and reduced the circumference to the Navajo people. Since the agent-act ratio asserts that we are the authors of our own acts, readers assume that Navajos caused the disease they contracted. The scene-act ratio merely places the act in a location. Here the responsibility may be on the location (something is wrong with the environment), but this is quite different from the focus on the agent. Interestingly, subsequent reports have revealed the Hantavirus has not been limited to the Navajo reservations; it attacked thirty-nine people in eleven states, and twenty-six have died, including Hispanics, a Hopi Indian, an African American, and Anglos (Gassaway, 1993).

Since the scope was imposed by journalists who themselves were *outside* the circumference, interpretations of the virus emerged from a distorted perspective. The effects of the biased reporting are revealed in a tribal council resolution claiming that the sensational news coverage inspired "discriminatory attitudes and activities against Navajo people" and "caused financial, emotional and psychological injury to the self-esteem and livelihood of the Navajo Nation" (Gassaway, 1993, p. 24). These effects are directly traceable to the designation by reporters that the ailment was a "Navajo" disease.

In using "Navajo" to define the circumference of the illness, the press associated the act (or illness) with the agent (or people) rather than the impersonal location. Perhaps the mysterious nature of the disease caused reporters to focus on the people rather than the act of acquiring the disease. Were the press's focus on the illness and location, a mechanistic interpretation of the act would be possible. Since nature in the form of illness is not an act of intent but a motion in Burkeian terms, the motives would be depersonalized. Reporters, however, tried to put a human face on the illness to personalize the story possibly to make it less frightening and confusing and more interesting. When the scope of the news focused on the Navajos, writers forced readers to derive their interpretation from the people. The reporters dialectically personalized and depersonalized the situation simultaneously. They personalized the illness by naming it "Navajo," but depersonalized the tribe by failing to understand its customs and traditions. The reporter who writes from outside the circumference emphasizes the agent-act ratio, but treats the agents as if they were objects. It appears as if the reporters blur the line between the personal agent and impersonal act (or illness). Reporters transform act to status by associating properties with the act. For instance, the reporters assume that the Indians must be doing something wrong to acquire the illness, become associated with the lowering of the status of the Navajo people.

Reporters' interpretation of the illness in terms of the Navajo circumference implies a teleological philosophy. That is, implicit in the press accounts is the notion that somehow the Navajos are inherently diseased people (agent-purpose ratio). Consequently, readers deduce from the articles that something must be wrong with the Navajos. This might be what the Navajo Times writer is ultimately accusing the dominant media of doing. The narrative of an Indian whose wife had succumbed to the virus represents the fears of the Navajos:

> People think we live in teepees and our homes are dirty. But that's not the case. My wife was very meticulous about keeping the house clean. (Gassaway, 1993, p. 24)

Thus, the negative stereotype of Indians is perpetuated. Rather than seeing those stricken as individuals, the press implied that the problem was motivated by a fault of the people as a whole by describing the illness as the

Navajo flu. The press accounts imply that either the Navajos are inherently diseased or they did something wrong to contract the illness. They are both victim and victimizer. So offended was the Navajo tribal council that it issued a resolution claiming that the biased news coverage had fostered discrimination (Gassaway, 1993, p. 24). An example offers evidence of the offending discrimination. Attempting to uncover the story, reporters intruded on the Navajo's privacy by insisting that they interview surviving relatives. The Indians resented the journalists' intrusion of the Navajo tradition of observing four days of intense mourning, a time when the dead person's name is never mentioned. According to the press secretary of the president of the Navajo Nation, Duane Beyal, the invasion of the mourners' privacy by reporters "was disrespectful, intrusive, disruptive, and upsetting to the whole idea of harmony," which is central to the Navajo culture (Gassaway, 1993, p. 25). Not only did the reporters fail in their judgment in defining the disease by the Navajo circumference, they exacerbated the problem by not understanding the customs and traditions of those within the circumference.

News coverers as agents and circumference

If journalists are considered as agents (authors of their own works) -- rather than agencies (instruments to pass on the news), more is revealed about the intrinsic nature of racist thinking. Further evidence of the misunderstanding created by defining circumference with a agent-act ratio is covertly embedded by reporters in their accounts of the deadly plague. Reporters writing from a Eurocentric circumference reveal a biased and condescending attitude toward the Navajos:

> The search for a culprit has been complicated by Indian customs. Navajos do not speak of the dead for fear it might slow the spirit's trip to the afterlife. Nor do they permit autopsies. Tribal members tend to view an untimely death with shame, since it might be interpreted as punishment for bad living. Indeed, some Indian elders were linking the illness to the adoption of fast food, MTV, and video games. (Toufexis, 1993, p. 57.)

The author implies that if the Navajos would let the non-Indians handle the problem, the mystery could be solved more quickly. An opposing viewpoint emanating from a perspective *inside* the circumference is articulated by the president of the Navajo Nation, Peterson Zah, who said, "Western medicine has its limitations" (Gassaway, 1993, p. 25). Zah's press secretary, elaborated on this point: "They (Western doctors) can't cure cancer and they can't cure AIDS -- while our medicine men have been here for thousands of years, so doctors should consult with our elders and work with them" (Gassaway, 1993, p. 25). The Navajos reject the self-proclaimed supremacy of the non-Native American culture, and dialectical positions are established between the press and the subjects of the coverage. Painfully obvious is a realization that reporters from the dominant press give a biased perspective in their coverage.

What emerges from this analysis is an awareness that two circumferences influence the interpretation of the scene, agent, and act. In this case, the reporters' use of "Navajo" to define the illness focuses on the people and their alleged deficiencies, such as implications they do not keep their houses clean. A second and much more implicit circumference is that of the writer. News accounts of the deadly illness reveal not only an ignorance of an alien culture but a disturbing and condescending message that the writers' culture (or circumference) is superior to Native Americans'. Such an observation ironically reveals as much about the "circumfered" Navajos as the "circumscribers." Burke cautions that it is an error to treat "motivational parts as though they were the motivational whole (Burke, 1945, p. 49). To understand the motives of a given situation, the reader of news accounts needs to consider the scope and motivations of both the subject and the writer. It is not sufficient to consider only the interpretation of the agent and the act that are the subjects of a news account. The writer becomes an agent also whose intentions are more covert because his or her circumference is implicit rather than explicit. Readers need to reevaluate the writer in terms of the agency-purpose ratio. Rather than assuming the writer is simply the instrument through which news is transmitted, readers need to consider the implicit biases. By considering the reporters' circumference in terms of a scene-act ratio, readers can more fairly interpret and assign motivations to the subjects of the news story.

When writers confront the choice of circumference for the location of the act and the motives of the agents, they grapple with what Burke calls "human freedom and the human necessity" (Burke, 1945, p. 84). To paraphrase Burke, if the circumference chosen by the reporter leads to an adequate interpretation, the necessity is a freedom; conversely, it is an enslavement if the interpretation is inadequate. In the case of the Hantavirus story, the interpretation is clearly inadequate, binding readers to erroneous and unfair impressions that those agents who lived on the Navajo reservation were somehow responsible for the act of the illness. In so doing, the reporters trampled the traditions and the dignity of a proud people.

Unfortunately, the reporters' coverage of the "Navajo flu" is not an isolated case. The history of the "Legionnaires' disease" and AIDS also reveal other examples of reporting that identified diseases with groups of people: Legionnaires and gay men. Furthermore, the identity led to the denigration of the group. For example, in the case of homosexuals, fears of the AIDS epidemic led some of the homophobic public to declare that gay men were just getting their just rewards for their immoral lifestyles. Until the press can recognize and eliminate the intrinsic racism and prejudice as well as extrinsic racist tendencies that bias reporting and ultimately prevent understanding of issues of diversity, a lack of multi-cultural understanding will persist.

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Phenomenology as Communication Science:
A Study of Parasocial Interaction in TV News

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Abstract

Do some television news viewers make friends with their favorite local news anchors through a sort of mediated rapport called *parasocial interaction (PSI)?* This paper lays the groundwork for answering this question experientially using phenomenological description and reduction, revealing presumptions overlooked by traditional administrative PSI studies.

The noema-noesis-I structure of intentional sense-making is traced. Next, meaning or intensionality is distinguished from sense-making. The intensional field of PSI is surveyed. Finally, PSI is described as a dialogic system in which TV news anchor and viewer encounter a shared body of meanings. That is, anchor/viewer PSI is a dialogue much like an interpersonal conversation, implying that PSI studies must take the anchor's dialogic experience into account.

This paper is taken from a chapter of the author's Ph.D. dissertation, Hello, Columbus: Two Perspectives on Parasocial Interaction, Ohio University, Athens, 1994.

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Phenomenology as Communication Science: A Study of Parasocial Interaction in TV News

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Phenomenology as Communication Science:
A Study of Parasocial Interaction in TV News

Mass communication research tentatively suggests that some television viewers relate to their favorite TV news anchors in a sort of mediated rapport called parasocial interaction (PSI), a theory first proposed in the *Journal of Psychiatry* by Horton and Wohl in 1956. The two psychologists observe that television seems to elicit feelings of "intimacy at a distance," particularly those programs in which the performers engage in direct address—facing and speaking directly into the camera lens as if conversing personally and privately. Horton and Wohl also conjecture that some TV viewers more than others work actively to cultivate long-distance "friendships" with the media partners who are a part of their daily lives.

The PSI theory's intuitive appeal begat an unbroken chain of television news audience effects research that has nibbled at the edges of the anchor phenomenon but failed to bite into the meat of the matter. Despite failures to link PSI to traditional theories of mass communication, the PSI concept now is used uncritically by many social scientists.[1]

The purpose of this paper is to investigate parasocial interaction between TV news anchors and their viewers (anchor/viewer PSI) from the perspective of its in-between region of communication—the correspondents' experiences—which traditional science is unable to tap. Betweeness is the notion that important, sometimes unnoticed, commodities of meaning reside between everyday things, emotions, and ideas. A science of betweeness emphasizes relationships.

Positivism misses the in-between region in part because it rejects direct experience in scientific judgment—so-called "self-elimination" (Merleau-Ponty, 1960/1964, p. 99). This hallmark of western science can be traced back to the Renaissance invention of the clock, which gave birth to the modern conception of time and reproducibility of events. Western science's urge to eliminate personal judgment from the production of knowledge has led to disembodied intelligence (Weizenbaum, 1976, p. 25ff). Elimination of self (personal experience) is particularly problematic for PSI study.

The in-between region is the investigative sphere of Edmund Husserl's (1859-1938) way of thinking about communication, a method of descriptive analysis called *transcendental phenomenology*. Phenomenologists did not originate the strategy of investigating in-between regions, but they tend to emphasize betweeness more than other scientists. This concentration on betweeness is not arbitrary or coincidental. Our customary ways of thinking about the world, which phenomenology tries to overcome, yields dichotomies such as mind/body, internal/external, objective/subjective, sender/receiver, performer/spectator, interpersonal/mass, quantitative/ qualitative, and so forth. Phenomenology bridges these cleavages of mundane life.

Phenomenology's role in investigating anchor/viewer PSI is not to compile new empirical data, which is the task of each particular science, but "to clarify, justify, and delimit the first principles and the limits of the area of objectivity with which each particular science can deal" (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990, p. 130).

Phenomenologists do not deny or discount the accomplishments of traditional science in general (Patton, 1990, p. 14) or its value to communication study in particular (Pilotta & Mickunas, 1990, p. 34). Husserl himself was trained as a mathematician before turning to philosophy and stressed the reliance of his *eidetic science* on material facts science (1913/1962, p. 56ff). He credits natural science for overcoming the non-empirical metaphysics of ancient Greek "philosophical spooks" (p. 74). Husserl scholar Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1960/1964) reminds us that phenomenology does not intend to replace positivist communication science:

> Husserl seems to us to be exemplary in that he may have realized better than anyone else that all forms of thought are in a certain sense in-

> terdependent. We need neither tear down the behavioral sciences to lay the foundations of philosophy, nor tear down philosophy to lay the foundations of the behavioral sciences. (p. 98)

The phenomenologists' lament for positivism is that it does not go far enough with the facts to explain human experience. Phenomenological communication scientists attempt to push empirical investigation of the fact-world into factors such as meaning, essence, and typology (Pilotta & Mickunas, 1990, p. 34). This role of filling in the gaps left by traditional science is not unusual for phenomenology, and, in fact, stimulated its birth as a philosophical movement (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990, pp. 15-27).

This paper is but an introduction of Husserl's method to describe anchor/viewer PSI experientially. Readers seeking more information might consult Husserl interpreters Ihde (1977), van Manen (1990), or Stewart and Mickunas (1990). For an authoritative text, see Husserl's own general introduction to phenomenology (1913/1962).

Phenomenological analysis of PSI does not conflict with the administrative school. On the contrary, the two investigations go hand-in-hand because they share epistemological concerns, a sentiment expressed by Husserl scholar Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1960/1964):

> We must not simply say that philosophy is compatible with sociology, but that it is necessary to it as a constant reminder of its tasks; and that each time the sociologist returns to the living sources of his [sic] knowledge . . . he [sic] practices philosophy spontaneously. Philosophy is not a particular body of knowledge; it is the vigilance which does not let us forget the source of all knowledge. (p. 110)

Investigating Experience

The traditional natural sciences, built on logical proofs and deified by Galileo's modern western culture, have a blind spot for human experience. Founded on the procedures of the natural sciences, traditional behavioral science takes a reductionist view of life. Though its explanations of phenomena might be valid in certain contexts and though it claims important technological accomplishments, it is inadequate to explore communication in general and anchor/viewer PSI in particular.

According to Husserl, experience in the natural attitude is mundane and taken-for-granted. He prescribes a method to suspend the presumptions of the natural attitude and its scientific prejudice against subjective experience. An example of a common sense presumption is that we live in a social world. Suspending presumptions does not mean we forget them. On the contrary, we are to question our own presumptions constantly, like having an internal alter ego who cross-examines every observation, every statement, and every conclusion: "Why did you say that?" and "Did you really see that or are you just assuming it?" and "Aren't you prejudging the thing by the name you're using for it?"

We do not think about our acts of collecting impressions of the newscasters when we watch the news on television. We simply watch. In our mundane experience, PSI happens unnoticed. Hence, the difficulty encountered by sociologists to pinpoint the phenomenon of anchor/viewer PSI. Phenomenology begins with the strangeness of the experience of PSI. Mundane existence must be made "strange" to reflect upon it. Transforming mundane existence into strangeness is the function of philosophy in general and of Husserl's method in particular (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xiii; Natanson, 1974, p. 6-8). The purpose of this phenomenological analysis is to unearth the primordial strangeness of PSI.

To integrate facts and ideas, we need not collect more facts. Instead, we may look to our own experience, the wellspring of all understanding, for all the evidence we need. The evidence is deciphered by thinking back on them in a method Husserl calls free imaginative variation. Again, in Merleau-Ponty's (1960/1964) words:

> We can expand our experience of social relationships and get a proper view of them only by analogy or contrast with those we have lived. We can do so, in short, only by subjecting the social relationships we have experienced to an imaginary variation. (p. 100)

At the heart of communication science is the dichotomy of objectivity versus subjectivity, the difference between the thing itself and one's own experience of the thing. Husserl breaches the subject-object gap by pointing out that our consciousness of PSI is intentional, that is, consciousness of something. Thus, phenomenology frees us from a naturalistic bias that subjective experience is an unreal, introspective version of concrete reality. To intentional consciousness, reality questions are superseded by meaning questions. Object and subject are linked inextricably by intentional awareness of the concrete world.

Phenomenology searches for a language adequately concrete to comprehend the meaning of PSI. This language is unfamiliar and difficult to learn because mundane existence resists giving up its secrets. We are trapped in the mundane world while trying to extract PSI from it with customary speech inadequate to ferret out PSI's meaning. "The operation of meaning," says Merleau-Ponty (1969/1973), "has its own internal side of which the whole flow of words is only a wake" (p. 132). Unusual ways of thinking and expressing are needed. Phenomenology is a mode of expression that can transform the phenomenon of the anchor/viewer relationship to its primordial strangeness.

Transforming anchor/viewer PSI to its primordial strangeness escapes routine language because the words we use to objectify PSI, or any interest of science, are doubly contingent. All social science discoveries are contingent on the joint presence of human beings in social life and equally contingent on the language used to describe that life. Merleau-Ponty (1960/1964, p. 112) characterizes the double contingencies of society and language as simultaneous centripetal and centrifugal forces of culture. Husserl claims that phenomenology rises above the double contingency to provide a foundation for all scientific thought, including natural science. Notwithstanding natural science's disinclination to recognize an ultimate or absolute foundation for knowledge, he shows that scientific objectification of nature is possible only through a plurality of subjects. Something is objective if in principle it can be demonstrated to and by everyone (Ströker, 1987, p. 119ff).

The next section summarizes how life's in-between regions are to be investigated objectively. Husserl teaches that all consciousness is intentional and provides in his general introduction of phenomenology (1913/1962, pp. 155-349) the basic tools to probe intentional consciousness, the phenomenological reduction and the transcendental reduction.

Experience and Intention

After clarifying what is meant by the term intention, this section traces the basic steps of phenomenological analysis: (1) suspension of the natural attitude by phenomenological reduction; (2) radical description of empirical experience by the technique of free imaginative variation; and (3) revelation of intentions in the transcendental reduction. The section concludes with an explanation of why and how transcendental reduction is different from traditional reductionism.

Phenomenological analysis is a rigorous description of how human consciousness is constituted. The object of phenomenological analysis is not consciousness itself, a study more appropriate to psychology, but the organizing activity of consciousness to have awareness or knowledge of the world—in other words, the constitution of experience. For phenomenologists, perception is not merely worldly bombardment of our senses. We interact with the world's impositions, we organize them, make sense of them. Consciousness is our sense-making activity. For psychologists, consciousness is a stream of mental processes flowing parallel to and mingling with other worldly processes and events and, consequently, a valid object for study. For phenomenologists, consciousness never can be objectified because it is the way, the universal medium of access, to any possible object of experience or knowledge—a television set, a picture displayed on the set, or a feeling of friendship for a television news anchor.

The activity of constituting human experience is ruled by a special correlational relationship called intention, the basic structure of all human experience. The phenomenological meaning of the term intention is different from everyday use. I might intend to do something, for example, watch my favorite TV news anchor. My intention to watch the news is a volitional plan, which might or might not be carried out. That my experience of news-watching is intentional is not a matter of choice. When I settle down in front of my TV set, what experience I have of news-watching will always be tied to how I sense the video picture and sound, how I position myself for watching, and how I select a channel to watch. Conversely, how my experience is structured depends on what news programs and anchors I encounter. The intention of my experience is in the tie or correlation of the *how* to the *what* (see: Figure 1, Part A). Husserl's tribal term for the what is noema, from the Greek word meaning that which is perceived or thought, and for the how, noesis, from the Greek word meaning mental intelligence, perception, or thought.

insert Figure 1 about here

Two clarifications of terminology at this point might head off confusion about intention and the intentional correlation: First, the *what* is the experience of an thing (concrete object, idea, feeling, etc.) and not the thing itself, in other words, my experience of seeing a TV news anchor and not the anchor herself or himself. Second, the structure of an experience is expressed as a *who/how/what* correlation, not simply the *how*. The how does not bring the what into being. My experience of viewing an anchor does not create the anchor or the anchor-viewing experience. Either proposition is metaphysical. We might illustrate the who/how/what versus how distinction by comparing a human experience to baking a pie. If we want a pie, we need a cook, a recipe, and ingredients. Just knowing how to make the pie (the recipe) is not enough—we will go hungry without the ingredients. The same is true, of course, with ingredients and no recipe or with ingredients and recipe and no cook.

Correlation of the how and what is similar but not identical to a statistical correlation in which one quantity predicts the other but does not *cause* the other. The same is true of the intentional correlation. Knowing about how experience is formed enables us to predict what the experience is like. Conversely, the what tells us something about the how. As in statistics, we qualify our observations by affirming that the how does not cause the what (pure idealism) and the what does not cause the how (pure behaviorism).

The difference between the probabilistic and intentional meanings of correlation is in the direction of relationship. Statistically, a correlation works in either direction; given one component, such as anchor/viewer PSI scores, we can predict the other component, audience size, or, given Arbitron ratings, we can predict the rank order of station PSI scores in a television market. A probabilistic correlation is commutative. Intention is not commutative because only the what is given, never the how. The phenomenologist's task is to infer the how from the what and to extrapolate from many what/how inferences the who.

The who (self or "I") of intention is never known directly, only reflexively by correlating the what to the how. The self necessarily is assumed.

Of course, I typically do not mull over my own existence or debate my news selection; I just pick a channel. Indeed, it would be very strange and unnatural to think it over. Mundane activity such as TV viewing is more or less spontaneous, a taken-for-granted act in the natural attitude. My reflection on the experience or phenomenon of news watching is not immediate. In fact, reflection requires all my powers of attention and my news watching slows or stops, especially if I want to be meticulous in my thinking.

Four naive but important aspects of reflection come to fore in pondering my TV news watching:

1. I experience an identity of a thing I call a "TV set." I see a single set, not many different sets, despite collecting many different views of the TV by moving around it and seeing it from different angles. What makes the various views congeal into a single experienced TV? Even if I had never seen a TV before and so did not know what TVs look like, I would still have a single thing—a black box with knobs emanating sounds and lights from a single shimmering facet—instead of many separate things. A video image is very different kind of thing, yet experience of it also is a congealing of multiple impressions.
2. The act I reflect on is in the past, while my reflection is in the present. A person cannot reflect on something without already having it, even if the object of reflection is something that has not happened yet. Yet, the act of reflection is always now. For example, I might think about my favorite news anchor while in the process of picking a channel. Perhaps I anticipate the anchor's reassuring presence or wonder whether this is the anchor's day off. Mentally I already have the anchor now, though I am still clicking my remote control to find the right channel.
3. My reflection itself is different from what I reflect on and suspends

or interrupts the experience that is the object of my reflection. If I starting thinking about my act of tuning in a news anchor person, I tune in to my act instead. This shift of mental focus requires that I suspend my activity in the natural attitude so that I can directly reflect on my act of viewing my favorite news anchor.

4. There are many (theoretically infinite) ways I can think about watching a TV news anchor, many more than I actually can carry out. Now, in my reflection, I might make myself aware of my ways of thinking about my favorite news anchor, TV news programs, and TV viewing, which, of course, comes from previous experience—for example, that anchors and televisions are "real"—that I am suspicious of news anchors who look too manicured, especially those without a skin blemish or single hair out of place—or that Dan Rather seems to try too hard—or that when I was a youngster I enjoyed a certain local news commentator even though I hated my father for switching from cartoons to the news—or that the name anchor suggests a hunk of rusty iron with barnacles—or the adage that TV news anchors have "blow-dry heads"—or that my college lures dozens of young women with the mirage that they will become the next Faith Daniels. These variations are how I make sense of anchors and newscasts. The difficulty is to judge how many variations are sufficient to describe how I constitute the phenomenon news anchor.

Having laid bare my preconceptions of my natural attitude toward anchors, I can account for them, thereby suspending or reducing their part in my experience of picking an anchor. This suspension of or stepping back from experience in order to reflect on it is the phenomenological reduction or *epoché*, a technical term Husserl borrowed from Greek skeptics referring to a suspension of judgment. As van Manen (1990, p. 46) says, the problem of the natural attitude is not knowing too little but knowing too much about the phenomena we wish to investigate. By suspending my natural attitude, I do not forget or discard my preconceptions; on the contrary, I keep reminding myself about them while thinking about anchor-watching. My thinking transcends or stands apart from its object, the experience of anchor-watching, to make sure that nothing is taken for granted.

The subject-object way of thinking is so ingrained that we tend to make the noema (what) into the external world of objects and the noesis (how) into our internal, mental processes. This is wrong. Noema and noesis are between us and our objects, two aspects of the same thing, never one without the other. Every mode of experience (noesis) points toward what is experienced (noema), and everything experienced (noema) implies a mode of experiencing that has it (noesis). The correlation of noema and noesis in turn tells something about the self who correlates them. Phenomenological analysis moves from the noema toward its reflexive referent, the noesis, which in turn reflexively correlates to the constitution of the "I" or self (see: Figure 1, part B). As Ihde (1977, p. 50) points out, the "I" is a late arrival in phenomenological analysis and only has significance because it encounters a world of things and other persons. Phenomenology is not introspection, which first claims an "I" and then correlates the world to it, but retrospection, an "I" reflecting on experience already lived through (van Manen, 1990, p. 10).

The vertical presentation of intention in Figure 1 is a convention only and is not intended to denote superiority/inferiority. Noesis is not "higher" than noema, nor is the "I" higher than noesis/noema. In terms of priority for phenomenological reduction, noema is first because it is our access to the other two components, which point to it. A horizontal diagram of the correlation is equally valid (for example, see: Ihde [1977, p. 44]). Figure 1's diagram of the noema-noesis-self correlation is vertical for four reasons: (1)

to imply the correlation's momentary, atemporal nature—time lines are displayed horizontally; (2) to indicate the potential of intentional analysis to bridge different planes of experience; (3) to visualize the idea of horizontalizing (treating equally) various noema in phenomenology's free variational method; and (4) to show how vertical intentions interlock with horizontal intensions (with an "s"), which are discussed in a later section.

Notwithstanding these qualifications of Figure 1, there is more to its vertical orientation than meets the eye. The vertical nature of experience is the object of an old and substantial tradition in transcendental philosophy. For example, Merleau-Ponty (1942/1963) speaks of human behavior's dialectic of transcendence in which the fact and meaning of life are a vertical circularity. In summary, intentional life transcends concrete situations.

Ihde (1977, pp. 32-40) breaks down the variational method of phenomenological description and reduction into a sequence of steps:

1. Survey the entire field of variations of the phenomena as they are given (without naturalistic presumptions).
2. Describe, don't explain, the phenomena.
3. Horizontalize the phenomena, that is, do not assume an initial hierarchy of "realities."
4. Probe the phenomena for structural or invariant features.

The variational method is a kind of brainstorming by the phenomenologist. Brainstorming is a common discussion/decision technique used by a group of people to list all possible options from a given field, establish evaluation criteria, and use the criteria to select the best option. As in brainstorming, the phenomenologist seeks all possible variations of the phenomenon, no matter how outlandish they seem to presumptions about the phenomenon. As in brainstorming, all variations are treated as equal possibilities. And as in brainstorming, the criteria for structuring the variations come from a close consideration of the variations themselves.

Free imaginative variation of experience in the epoché does not yet show us its intentional structure. We must generalize from individual transcendental descriptions of particular variations of an experience to obtain its invariant structure or essence—universal, necessary structures of consciousness that are valid for all experiencing subjects at all times and in all places (Pilotta & Mickunas, 1990, p. 14). Essences do not "exist" per se. All facts are contingent; however, the experience of facts as contingent is essential. On the other hand, all objects of reflection can be maintained as identical, though our correlations to them vary. I experience the one TV anchor (or one newscaster or whatever name I choose to use) and not many separate anchors because I have an insight into the essence of experience of that particular anchor. The various views of the anchor hang together into a single person because this is how I see. My experience is essential.

An essence of an object of experience is not itself an object, physical or metaphysical, but instead a general, structural feature of the process of making sense of various perspectives of the empirical object. Husserl speaks of intentions to empirical objects filling or fleshing out our essential experience of them. The essence of experience of an object is a necessary condition for experiencing its empirical presence. Pilotta and Mickunas (1990) explain how we use essential insights to identify material things:

> Whether the essence exists or not is irrelevant here; what is relevant is that an essential insight into a typology is a condition for the experience of a spatial object and that the perceived spatial objects may be changed within the limits of the typology without destroying the experience of all of them being of identical kind. (p. 16)

An essential insight into an object's typology or generality is not a psychological category, another sort of generality. We can understand the difference between a psychological category and a phenomenal essence by considering a group of generically diverse things. My perception can group empirical things by virtue of their physical proximity, such as an array of buttons on a TV remote control. They become a group in essence and not because I have a preconceived category buttons or because the things have a priori meanings that make them part of the group remote control. The things are a group because in perceiving them I have a generality, an essence, neither particular nor universal, which does not require meaning for the things but merely my making sense of them.

The natural attitude's iron grip is difficult to escape: our natural tendency is to misconstrue phenomenal essence as a sort of ideal form of things that remains after rendering away empirical particulars. An essence of an experience is neither in me nor in the object of my perception. Rather, it is a correlation between me and the thing, the structure of my awareness of it.

Reduction of experience from free imaginative variants or fillings to invariant patterns of their constitution is known as the eidetic reduction or transcendental reduction. By extending Figure 1's model of intention, we can symbolize the eidetic reduction by the method of free imaginative variation (see: Figure 2). Various correlations between noema and noeses are traced until essential noetic structures emerge, which in turn provide insights into the essential dimensions of self-experience.

insert Figure 2 about here

Husserl's method is not so different from other empiricisms, which also are in the business of generalizing. Most scientific disciplines, including positivist sociology, seek out a series of examples prior to inductive generalization from sample to population. Particulars are selected according to special rules and as evidence to prove truths about the general population.

A sample is studied instead of the entire population because examining the entire population is inefficient, if not impossible. However, generalizing from particulars is different in phenomenological analysis. The transcendental subject reflectively derives free variations of an experience, adds particular "sample" variations until the essential structure of the experience is revealed, and takes as evidence the undeniable presence of the phenomena. An eidos is an essential possibility that is fulfilled or fleshed out by empirical experience, like hands groping for an invisible form.

Phenomenology, therefore, is a radical empiricism—empirical in its exclusive interest in describing the intentional link between what is experienced and how it is experienced, and radical in its exclusion of preconceptions (explanations, theories, labels, etc.) that are not part of experience.

Is it not contradictory for phenomenology, a philosophy that condemns reductionism in positivist science, to do reductions to gain its insights? Husserl and company say no: the positivist reduction and phenomenological reduction are two different operations on two different things. The positivist reduces the complexity of nature to get to its causes. A good example from natural science is geneticism: reducing all life to its pattern of molecules in deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). From the geneticist's perspective, the DNA cause biological life to be the way it is.

Cause-and-effect is irrelevant to the phenomenologist. We cannot say that our experiences of things cause them to be. The phenomenologist reduces complex human experience of nature, not nature itself, to get to experience's essential structures. The goal of phenomenological reduction is not to ignore or get rid of the uniqueness of individual experiences, but open one's self to all possible variations of the phenomenon and to trace their links to what they all have in common—the self.

The vital procedures of Husserl's science of experience are rigorous description and reduction. The preceding synopsis of description and reduction, though necessarily cursory, lays the groundwork for discovering the pre-reflective, experiential roots of PSI. The existential philosophers add to phenomenological analysis a third step, interpretation, which is the contribution of language (for examples, see: Heidigger, 1962, p. 37; Lanigan, 1984, pp. 4-17; Nelson, 1986, p. 44). Language converges in pre-reflective consciousness the basic conditions for communication: the other (intersubjectivity), time (temporality), and dialogue (signification). We are condemned to meaning, says Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. xix), by being born into a world of language, the indispensable condition of all thought and being. The claim is that our reflection cannot escape the constraints of language—we think solely in words. Interpretation is reflection on experience in an inescapable linguistic tradition to obtain the meaning of being. Therefore, language contributes meaning in both intentional experience and reflection on experience (Mickunas, 1990B, p. 83-87). In other words, transcendental phenomenologists interpret experience whether or not they use the term.

Van Manen suggests whether a phenomenology is descriptive or interpretive, it should satisfy the criteria of the validating circle of inquiry: "A good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience—is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience" (p. 27). His standard is embraced in this project.

The formation of linguistic meaning cannot be comprehended without first dealing with primordial meaning obtained corporeally from life experience before words are introduced. We shall call the corporeal kind of meaning *sense*.

Sense-Making and Intention

The transcendental reduction of phenomenology traces two structures of human experience: sense-making and meaning. This section distinguishes these structures as a preliminary step to using them to decipher anchor/ viewer PSI.

The previous section's definition of intention as consciousness of needs elaboration. The of correctly emphasizes the ever-present correlation of experienced to how they are experienced, but misleading metaphysical presumptions sneak in with the of: that things in the world have meaning before we make sense of them. On the contrary, intention is literally making sense. We casually talk of making sense of something when we are trying to understand it. I can make sense without introducing meaning, the contribution of language. Anchor/viewer PSI is a good example of sense without meaning. Horton & Wohl's PSI concept has made sense to four decades of communication researchers, though they have difficulty saying what PSI means. In fact, until recently most of the meaning has been in its label.

The following development of the sense/meaning distinction will prepare our understanding of the role of language in PSI. Mickunas' (1990A) work on intention guides the discussion.

In our everyday activity in the world, we encounter many different objects (noema), which might be material objects such as a TV set or abstract entities such as anchor/viewer PSI. They become objects because we focus on them. All such objects of experience will be treated as constant, while our correlations to them will vary. Thinking about (objectifying) these objects is only part of our experience of them; experience has sensory, intuitional, and practical aspects or moments, all of which come to play in anchor/viewer PSI and all of which are subsumed in intention.

The willful self determines what intentions it engages, and the objects determine the structure of the intentions. Material objects such as an out-of-reach remote require me to position my visual apparatus to form various perspectives of the remote and its surroundings. Judged from this side and that, I determine its presence on the floor and judge that my foot can just reach it and drag it along the floor toward me so that I do not have to get up. As Mickunas (1990A) says, "whether one is a cat or a divinity, one will have to engage in such 'intentions'" (p. 4). The object determines the structure of intentional functions.

One cannot avoid physically walking around a material object to get various perspectives of it. Similarly, metaphysical entities such as PSI invite experience appropriate to their own structures and logics. Though intuition of such correlations might rely wholly on complex, subjective activities, such as applying rules and drawing conclusions, in principle they are as objective as judgments about physical objects. Anchor/viewer PSI can be objectified. Making sense (or not making sense) of either physical or intuited objects is a matter of selecting appropriate correlational activities. It makes sense for me to stretch out my foot toward a remote control but no sense to extend my limb toward my feeling of comfort when my favorite anchor is on TV. Conversely, I might posit a scientific hypothesis about anchor/viewer PSI, but positing a remote control's sliding along the floor toward me will not put it into my hand.

In sense-making terms, anchor/viewer PSI is extremely complex, to say the least. A person can be doing something other than watching TV news to interact parasocially with the presence of a preferred anchor, for example, responding to a survey about PSI or reading an article about the anchor in the gossip column. TV viewing itself is a strange combination of perceptual and intuited experiences. I see my favorite news anchor in the video window and hear the anchor's familiar voice—I perceive the anchor—but I cannot walk around the anchor to collect other visual and auditory perspectives. The same limited view of the anchor persists in my experience even in oblique angles toward the screen. In other words, televisual space is radically different from the "normal" space of everyday life. Yet, the presence of the anchor makes sense.

A viewer's experience of the anchor via television falls in Ihde's (1977, pp. 139-143) category of machine-mediated experience. He would say the

TV set is a partial transparency between me and the anchor. In other words, the TV shows me the anchor, though only partially, and the TV is transparent, that is, I do not notice it as I attend to the anchor.

Sociological analysis of anchor/viewer PSI features an ongoing debate about whether people are active or passive when they watch TV. This phenomenological analysis will show that viewers are active. The claim that all experience of the world is intentional is a radical assertion about anchor/viewer PSI that supports the role-taking model: PSI is active sense-making. Televisual experience defined as intention completely sidesteps psychologisms such as mental activity/passivity. TV chooses what objects I focus my attention on, but I have no choice but to make sense of them. Even sleep does not stop intentional activity. As a viewer, I actively engage an anchor I see on TV and cannot avoid engagement if I choose to focus on her or him. The sense I make of my parasocial partner, the essence of my experience of the anchor, is structured by the anchor's presence.

The sense we make of PSI through eidetic reduction is bound by our language. When we try to reflect on our own experiences, we immediately are dumbstruck by an obvious, but nevertheless momentous, realization: our efforts to be objective and complete are handicapped by our very words. We are doomed to describe intentional experience with language that is equally intentional, that is, equally subject to our sense-making activity. Hence, in the next section we must show how our linguistic formations correlate to our experience to produce meaning.

Meaning and Intension

Language unavoidably is the vehicle of our phenomenological analysis of anchor/viewer PSI. We must be as explicit as possible about how language contributes meaning to the phenomena under study. This section briefly outlines the correlation of language to reflected experience, the effect of reflection on language, the superfluity of meaning contributed by language, and the paradox of linguistic interpretation. As in the previous section, Mickunas (1990A) is our principal guide.

Intentional sense-making is pictured in Figures 1 and 2 as a vertical objectivity of I/noesis/noema. Horizontally associated to the noema are the meaning relationships or intensions (with an "s") of linguistic structures (see: Figure 2). Language articulates or signifies the vertical sense-making activities focused on various noema and through signification extends them horizontally. Like the intention, the intensional correlation of who-how-what (I-noesis-noema) points toward the what (see: Figure 3, Part A). Also like intention, reflection on intension reveals the correlation reflexively from noema back to noesis and from noesis back to the "I," the linguistic tradition (see: Figure 3, Part B).

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insert Figure 3 about here

All language implicitly is a triadic dialogue: to speak is to speak to someone about something, even if the someone is the speaker (Scudder & Mickunas, 1985). Consequently, our language is correlated to objects just as our experience is correlated to objects. Linguistic correlations are not arbitrary; they must make sense with respect to their objects and context. They articulate or point out the noema of experience. We show this articulation as a horizontal succession of conventional signs, marks, and sounds, which have no meaning in and of themselves, but constitute meaning in correlation with the noema (see: Figure 3). Thus, our life experiences have meaning for us because we correlate language to them, but they make sense in any case because sense-making is at the core of coping with the world.

The philosophical-scientific debate about the source of meaning has raged since the Greeks. Contemporary theories posit universal linguistic structures to explain how we get meaning from the world. Such metaphysical constructs fail to show how particular linguistic marks and sounds are derived from the universal meaning structures or vice-versa. Mickunas (1990A) refocuses the debate about meaning by sidestepping it: "The question of meaning, even at the intensional level, has always been a redundancy whose exclusion avoids the spilling of innocent ink. In brief, such questions make no sense" (p. 13). Phenomenology shows that language articulates or makes explicit one's implicit sense-making activities, in which objects are experienced by generalizing perspective formations. Language itself is a tracing of intensional generalities of particular vertical intentions, which are generalities of particular empirical objects of experience.

This phenomenological analysis must account not only for the prominence of language in PSI but also for its language of analysis. It is no great revelation to point out that words and their wielders are not innocent. In forming horizontal.intensions toward objects, a user of language is part of a linguistic tradition that effects expression and is affected by it. Thus, it is impossible to investigate language by using language without transforming the object of investigation.

The linguistic/semiotic critical tradition of communication science notes the superfluity of language, that is, its overabundance of horizontal intensions with respect to a particular vertical intention or objectivity. This overabundance of linguistic meanings is determined socially and escapes all attempts to confine it to rule systems or factual designations. Words and facts cannot be correlated one-to-one.

Language's obstinacy is elucidated in the impossibility of a final interpreter. Who would do the ultimate correlating of words and facts? A speaker's intellect can never stand outside her or his linguistic tradition to survey the interaction of terms. Every interpretation of the entire intensional process by the final interpreter introduces a superfluity of associations not subsumed in the interpretation, which in turn require interpretation, a process of infinite regress. Neither can an evaluative system such as rationality account for its own residue of interpretive activity.

The paradox of the final interpreter points back to the value of mixing research paradigms for scientific investigation of anchor/viewer PSI. Metaphorically, we can stand outside the language of one tradition to interpret it with the language of another tradition. Our understanding of PSI will be enriched by the shifts in linguistic perspective, similar to cultural insights gained by learning to speak languages (Ihde, 1977).

In summary, we meet our own intentions through a background of linguistic articulation of correlating intensions. Through our practical interaction with the concrete world, we find it always is articulated meaningfully. Interacting with the world is but a rehearsal for interacting with other persons—social interaction, and anchor/viewer PSI in particular. Thus, intensions constitute both subject and object, both our mechanism for interpreting PSI and our mode for understanding it. The next section contemplates linguistic articulation of the network of intensions known as PSI.

Parasocial Interaction as Intensional Structure

By revealing intentional and intensional structures, phenomenological reduction confirms what we already know intuitively: the term *parasocial interaction* is loaded with meaning. To name something is to make it an object of consciousness, and to pose the name in a scientific journal, as Horton and Wohl (1956) did, is to imbue it with a superfluity of rational logic that establishes a legitimacy for it. By naming it, they made PSI something to be reckoned with, and so it was and is.

Seen as evolving intensional structures directed toward parsimony, the record of positivist empirical PSI study to date is a chronicle of attempts to restructure PSI's intensional field—to have new words to refer to it. First, PSI was made equal to artifact of loneliness. This equivalence failed empirical tests (intentions) and the pseudonym (intension) was dropped. Then it was made equal to response-to-anchor. This term failed and was dropped. Then it was made equal to user gratification. This pseudonym showed some merit, but did not account for all empirical relationships. The term was dropped. The most recent anchor/viewer PSI pseudonym is interactive/reflexive role-taking (Cook, 1994). Unfortunately, this term is not all-inclusive. Anchor/viewer PSI appears to be role-taking-plus-"X."

A transformation occurred in the thinking of sociological PSI researchers, beginning with Levy (1979). Recognizing PSI's complexity and superfluity, media researchers stopped trying to come up with a single term of equivalence. They gave up on a parsimonious PSI. Instead, anchor/viewer PSI was made equal to positive values of a series of attitude statements known as the PSIS. The number of statements has varied from as few as four to as many as 30 for my Columbus survey and has settled on ten in recent studies. The term *parasocial interaction* now means a series of statements, each with its own field in which things make sense and have meaning.

Parsimony is sought by all sciences. We like things simple and we get frustrated when they turn out complex. Will anchor/viewer PSI turn out to be a simple or complex thing? The apparent complexity of PSI is an artifact of the increasingly complex and sophisticated (some would say arcane) research tools used to investigate it. For example, we would like to think we need the PSIS because PSI is complex and cannot be equated to a single term. This might be the case, but the introduction of multiple horizontal structures in the scientific process precludes a univocal result. Complexity tends to issue forth from complex methodologies.

Phenomenology offers a different attitude toward parsimony in communication science. The simple fact is life is complicated. Experience is always a thing-plus-"X," or as van Manen (1990) says, plus the ineffable:

"Lived human experience is always more complex than the result of any singular description" (p. 16). Van Manen's assertion about the ineffable is not an end run around the issue of parsimony in scientific knowledge building. Simplicity and clarity are the goals of phenomenology as they are for sociology. To simplify is the essence of eidetic reduction just as it is in hypothetico-empirical theory construction. But as phenomenologists we never can expect our reflections to take in life experience in its entirety.

In summary, the label *parasocial interaction* offers a superfluity of meanings in the natural attitude that must be held in suspension while tracing its vertical intentional correlations in experience.

The Next Step: Dialogic Domain of Communication

Horton and Wohl's (1956) original speculation that we make friends with the people we watch on television has a certain native appeal that has earned it mainstream acceptance in the communication research community despite our inadequate understanding of parasocial relations. Positivist research on anchor/viewer PSI is poised to be informed and redirected by phenomenological analysis of interpersonal experience. Even before old, simplistic notions of how the mass media affect the audience gave way to a more sophisticated, comprehensive view, communication scientists were ready to accept the PSI thesis. Now that both the administrative and critical paradigms invest the audience with a more active role in communication (Livingstone, 1989; Seiter, 1992) an integrative approach to the active TV viewer has the potential to revolutionize our understanding of PSI.

Following Husserl, this paper has traced the first two steps to investigate anchor/viewer PSI in terms of the anchors' and viewers' experiences are (1) to perform a phenomenological reduction of naturalistic prejudices toward the object, and (1) to trace the basic structures of the experiences—intentional (sense) and intensional (meaning) correlations of who (I), how (noesis), and what (noema). The next step in experiential analysis of anchor/viewer PSI is to add to the foundation provided by transcendental phenomenology a complete appreciation of communication as intersubjectivity or human collective consciousness. This is the dialogic domain of communication. The antiquated conception of mass communication as message passing must be replaced by a new, circular, dialogic model in which a TV news anchor and viewer are motivated by each other's anonymity to share a meant object (see: Figure 4).

A key to understanding anchor/viewer PSI is inclusion of the news anchor in PSI's dialogic system. PSI research tends to deal only with a viewer's experience. Certainly an anchor's dialogic experience is pertinent to studying anchor/viewer PSI because it completes a viewing experience. When reading news reports to a TV camera, an anchor participates in a dialogue with the viewer as surely as when meeting a person face-to-face.

• • • • •

Footnote

[1] Though the term *parasocial interaction* is used exclusively by the administrative school of positivist, sociological media scholars (Livingstone, 1990), the experience of relating to others through television lately has caught the attention of scholars of the critical school, as they shift from textual analysis of the television medium to ethnographic audience analysis (Seiter, 1992, p. 61). Contemporary ethnographers use various labels for the television viewing experience of any content genre: *televisual* (Nelson, 1986), *dialogic* (Newcomb, 1984; Mickunas, 1990A), and *telelogic* (Ball-Rokeach & Reardon, 1988).

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Figure 1

Intention in Experience and Reflection

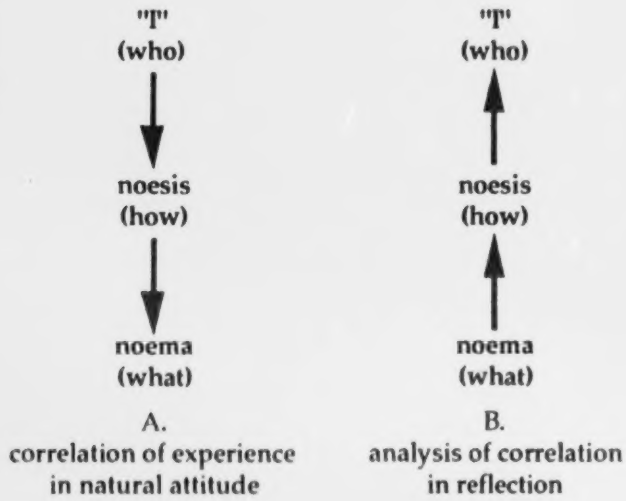


Figure 2

Eidetic Reduction Through Free Imaginative Variations

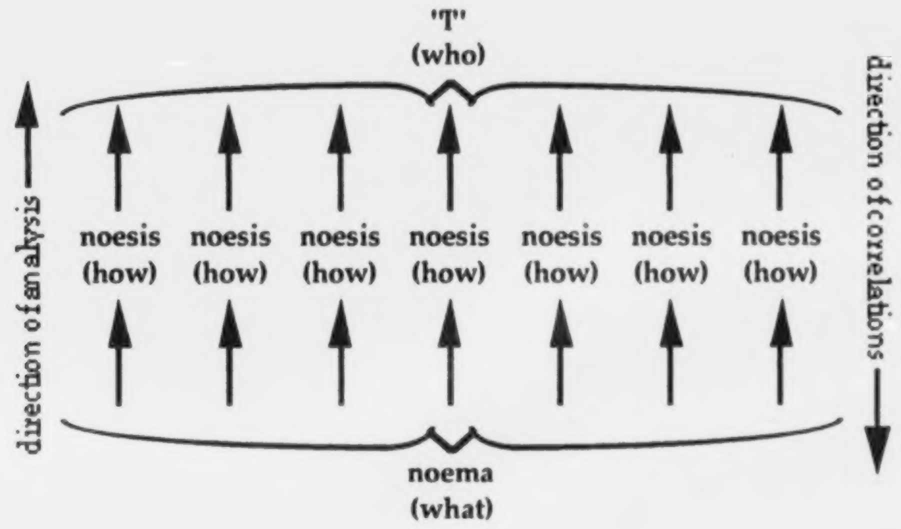
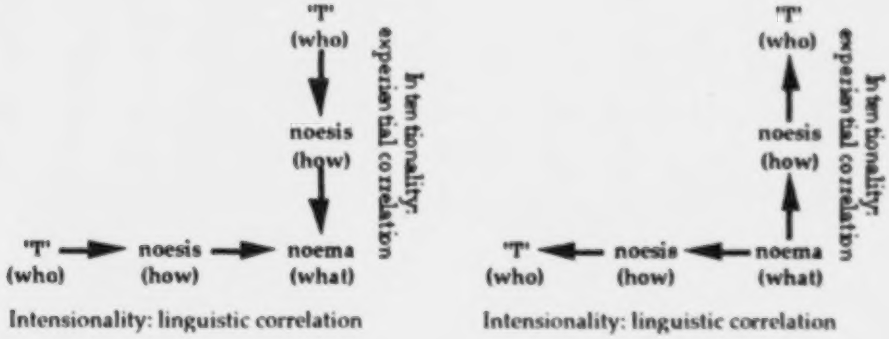


Figure 3

Intention and Intension

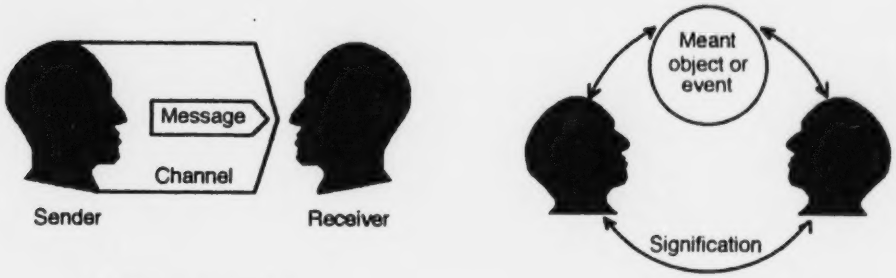


A.
correlation of experience
in natural attitude

B.
analysis of correlation
in reflection

Figure 4

Competing Models of Communication



traditional model of communication

dialogic model of communication

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Press Theories, Practices, and Their Legacies for the Future of the News Media

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QUALITATIVE STUDIES DIVISION

Abstract of "Press Theories, Practices, and Their Legacies for the Future of the News Media"

This article sketches the conflicting traditions of civic republicanism and classical liberalism vis a vis the Habermasian notion of the 18th century bourgeois public sphere. It draws a positive line of continuity between the supervisory exposes of the revolutionary period and the muckraking tradition of the progressive era. Furthermore, it argues that the contradictory trend to a commercial press in the 19th century culminated in industrial news formulas which restrict news to an official, mainstream ideology serving a unitary public sphere. The paper argues, through an adaptation of Habermas's ideal speech situation, that the news media must be repoliticized and that industrial news formulas must give way to the articulation of multicultural values if public spheres are to be reinvigorated and democracy is to be radicalized.

In 1991 United States citizens celebrated the bicentennial anniversary of the adoption of the First Amendment to the Constitution. In a comment on the state of the press just one year later, President Bush lamented what he saw as the state of contemporary politics and its first rule: "be ugly, be nasty, everything goes, no accountability, and the press in the foulest mood."

Mangled syntax aside, Bush was correct in pinpointing the "collusion" of the mass media and politics in distorting political discourse and with it the idea and practice of the public and public life. He was also right when he pointed out that this [1992] had been a weird political year. This strangeness was highlighted by the appearance of presidential candidates in new public arenas, ostensibly because the traditional venues for making news did not seem to be reaching enough of us.

Consequently, we had Bill Clinton speaking to the concerns of youth on MTV and to the concerns of racially diverse audiences on the Arsenio Hall Show. He also appeared on the Donahue Show and spoke to female audiences concerned about family values, women's rights, and gender equity. And, Bush, Clinton, and Perot all appeared on the Larry King Show. Perhaps the most unpredictable media event of all was the first very highly rated 30-minute advertisement (second highest rating in its time slot) by talking head Ross Perot who shunned high production values and addressed the poor condition of the economy with non-glitzy graphs and a simple pointer.

And yet, today, when politicians, conservative ideologues, and leftist cultural critics assert as a commonplace that the mass media are the public sphere, they generally mean the newspaper press and the conventional electronic news programs (Carpignano et al., 1990, pp. 35-55). So the question that we must ask is what do these signs portend for the future of the news media in their reputed roles as facilitators of a democratic society?

In this paper, we will suggest that the strangeness alluded to above is merely an index of a general failure of the conventional mass media to present news and views which speak to, or with, the diverse voices that comprise our multicultural society. Our argument is premised on the assumption that multiple publics must be articulated with conventional and alternative media in order to shape public policy. Here, our argument owes its intellectual provenance to Nancy Fraser, who has cogently argued that a unitary normative public sphere is impossible in a multicultural society (Fraser, 1993). The paper will situate the development of the public sphere and the press in the conflicting traditions of civic republicanism and Lockean liberalism and it will suggest that multiple publics can emerge out of this past through a new political economy of the media which includes the reconstitution of newsroom practices on the grounds of multicultural interaction (Wood, 1969; Pocock, 1975; Hartz, 1975; Schroyer, 1985; Habermas, 1989; Fraser, 1993).

In order to sketch the theoretical outlines of an emancipatory mass media, we must gaze back to the lessons of the past. Indeed, as James Carey put it to journalism educators in 1978, "the great single task of scholarship is to restore the idea of the public and the public life...and secondly that we must aid the media in restoring the public as a real rather than a fictive part of American politics...that we must become a group of rational men and women who must argue with the press as they argue with one another" (1978, 24-25).

Carey was of course aware of Jurgen Habermas's 1974 essay, "The Public Sphere," in the New German Critique. Since then, our knowledge of the history of the bourgeois public sphere has been considerably enhanced by the full version of Habermas' work, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society published in 1989. In this section of the article, we will sketch Habermas's conception of the liberal, bourgeois public sphere on the grounds of the American eighteenth century experience and contrast it with recent historical scholarship on the tradition of civic republicanism. The goal is to show the shortcomings of this bourgeois public sphere both in its conception and in its historical transformation. This modest exercise is not meant to settle any historiographical debates. Instead it is offered merely as a synthetic set of contestable positions to guide debate on the future of public spheres reinvigorated by a reconstituted mass media. The aim is to begin to theorize the place of the media in a multicultural, democratic society.

Habermas traces the emergence of the European bourgeois public out of its reaction to the repressive apparatus of the ancien regime. The first example of "public-like" behavior is what Habermas calls the concept of "representative publicness" (1989: 5). This term is at first blush deceptive, but it is important to clarify its meaning for it re-emerges in a somewhat different guise in both the 19th and 20th centuries.

The feudalistic notion of representative publicness in Europe concerned the virtual identification of the prince and the estates of his realm with the country. Instead of just being its representatives, they represent it in a specific sense: they represent their lordship not for, but 'before' the people. The aura of this representative publicness involves what Habermas calls the staging of publicity wedded to personal attributes--such things as insignia, dress, and demeanor--in short a code of noble conduct far from a sphere of unfettered political communication (1989: 8). With the rise of the absolutist nation-state, the public splits off from the person of the ruler and refers to the state which has its existence embodied in a military, a bureaucracy, and some kind of judicial system. In short, "public" now means this state apparatus with regulatory and coercive functions (1989: 18).

The function of state regulation emerged alongside of the development of a traffic in commodities. When the traffic in goods began to traverse the trade centers of Europe, merchants demanded some measure of protection and together with the merchants, the financial arms of the states were interested in trading news. Consequently, a traffic in trade news developed in the form of reproducible news letters which merchants organized as they did the first mail routes connecting their news letters with other merchants.

Historians have generally described these 15th, 16th, and 17th century news letters as the forerunners of the modern press, although, as Habermas notes, "there exists a press in the strict sense only once the regular supply of news becomes public, that is accessible to the general public" (1989: 16). This nascent "press" therefore served early capitalist relations.

When the press does become public, it does so as a servant of the state--facilitating the administration of expanded national and territorial economies. In other words, the state began to use the press to spread information in an efficient imperial manner.

A more modern sense of the public was formulated in the late 17th and early 18th century. Habermas explains how, at that time, the state used the press "to promulgate instructions and ordinances and the addressees of the authorities' announcements genuinely became the public," although not yet fully worked out in the modern critical, bourgeois sense (1989: 21). As Habermas puts it, "this stratum of the 'bourgeois' is the real carrier of the public, which from the outset is a reading public" (1989:

23).

Habermas defines this eighteenth century bourgeois public sphere as an arena where private people gathered together and employed their reason to debate and discuss the issues of the day (1989: 27). In their discourse, they stood apart from the private interests of civil society and the authority of the state, warranted or otherwise. Indeed, their discourse in England became oppositional by challenging the corruption of the Court and Parliament as destructive of English freedom guaranteed by the balance of the mixed constitution--the executive power in the monarchy, the order and stability of the aristocracy in the judiciary and upper chamber of the House of Lords, and the democratic element in the House of Commons (Bailyn, 1967b: 20-24).

The public arenas were coffeehouses of which London claimed 3,000 by 1710 (Habermas, 1989: 32). The coffeehouses were an interesting mix of oral and print traditions for it was early 18th century writers who supplied the work upon which critical debate turned. In The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, Bernard Bailyn explains the importance of these writers and rhetors to the American revolutionary generation:

> "These early eighteenth century writers--coffeehouse radicals and opposition politicians, spokesmen for the anti-Court independents within Parliament and the disaffected without, draftsmen of a 'country' vision of English politics that would persist throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth--faded subsequently into obscurity and are little known today. But more than any other single group of writers

> they shaped the mind of the American revolutionary generation (Bailyn, 1967a: 35).

In particular, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon's 144 articles, printed as Cato's Letters in The London Journal and The British Journal popularized the republican vocabulary in which liberty was threatened by despotic power (Smith, 1988: 25).

While the first 60 years of the American colonial press was a relatively tepid period, many newspapers reprinted the work of these eighteenth century coffeehouse radicals--in particular Cato's Letters--to warn against what colonial printers and writers saw as an incipient design or conspiracy to foster the same political corruption in individual colonies as was taking place in England. In fact, Warner argues that the ideology of republicanism was made possible by this print public sphere. So, while media historian Michael Schudson is correct to claim that the colonial press for the most part avoided controversy and failed to relay news, it did serve the pre-revolutionary function, as Bailyn and Warner contend, of recognizing the threat of conspiracy to subvert the mixed constitution that was to be at the heart of transformative events from 1765-1775 (Schudson, 1991: 434; Bailyn, 1967a: 95; Warner, 1990).

Therefore, the concept of publicity is an important development in the emerging political language of republicanism. According to Habermas, publicity enters the English language via the French around 1700 and simply meant that what was submitted to the judgment of the public gained publicity. So, the institutions of the bourgeois public sphere were a mix of oral and print traditions, but increasingly what was submitted to the bourgeoisie in terms of publicity came to them via printed matter.

In his application of Habermasian ideas to the colonial American experience, Warner argues that the assumptions of impersonality and supervision were key terms in the enlargement of the public sphere and in its objective claim to submit authorities to critical and popular examination (1990: 3, 53). The assumption of impersonality concretely tied political goals of civic action to opinion free from grounding in personal status and, slowly but surely, installed the colonists' claim to emancipation. As historians of republicanism have pointed out, the newspaper and the pamphlet were integral to the revolution (Arendt, 1963; Bailyn, 1965, 1967a; Wood, 1969; Warner, 1990).

Perhaps the pivotal point in the emergence of this democratic consciousness was the Stamp Act, for it changed the way most colonial press proprietors thought of their newspapers and their own roles. The press began to be seen as the central contributors to the public sphere. As Schlesinger puts it, the press emboldened patriots to speak their minds and the press in turn were being seen as engines of opinion (1971: 46-47, 82).

This supervisory, or as Bailyn calls it (1965: 5-6; 1967: 6), monitorial attitude to political authority, intensified and resulted in a new type of journalistic report after the Stamp Act: the expose (Leonard, 1986: 33). When the press exposed corruption, its expressions were firmly republican. Republicanism emphasized devotion to a transcendent public good, not the self-interested pursuit of the Lockean atomic individual (see Pocock, 1975, 509-552). As Nerone notes, "while the liberalism of John Locke and Adam Smith encouraged the pursuit of self-interest in the marketplace and in politics, republicanism emphasized the centrality of 'civic virtue' to the survival of republics, which are always endangered by 'licentious' individuals who seek self-interest at the expense of the public good" (1992: 167; see also, Schroyer, 1992: 293-294).

The republican tradition was clearly about the place of power in politics for the colonists recognized that its exercise was crucial to their liberty. Furthermore, they understood that the use of power in civic action necessitated a sound grounding in political argumentation. Hence the colonists became interested in news, and the colonial press supplied this need. While the political ferment surrounding the Stamp Act may not have been the beginning of the activist press, it was "the beginning of newspapers with long-term commitments to controversy and a determination to make distant disputes fit into arguments close at home" (Leonard, 1986: 228).

The expose, then, is the logical extension of the press's role in controlling authorities through supervision. Warner argues that the principle of supervision meant that "when the virtuous citizen fixes his vigilant eye upon the civic scene, what he is looking at is a printed object. And because his gaze upon the material artifact of print is equivalent to the 'popular examination' of officials... it follows that the press, in a republic with corrupt leaders, is naturally an opposition press" (1990: 53).

The expose was thus the crucial journalistic legacy of the Republican Revolutionary period and a precursor to the muckraking tradition of journalism in the early twentieth century. Leonard contends that the exposes of the Revolutionary period "mark a fundamental change in the press. The habit of searching for political secrets in the community became fixed and the citizens who conducted the press gained confidence that their discoveries were true. These ideas had been exceptional before the 1760s, now they became common, almost an unthinking assumption around print shops" (1986: 52).

Of course the public sphere was never just a reading public. It was also a speaking public. This point is articulated particularly well by Hannah Arendt's description of the republican love of public discourse. She writes that

> "Americans knew that public freedom consisted in having a share in public business, and that the activities connected with this business by no means constituted a burden but gave those who discharged them in public a feeling of happiness they could acquire nowhere else. They knew very well, and John Adams was bold enough to formulate this knowledge time and again, that the people went to the town assemblies, as their representatives were later to go to the famous conventions, neither exclusively because of duty nor, even less, to serve their own interests, but most of all because they enjoyed the discussions, the deliberations and the making of decisions (1963: 119).

Arendt maintains that the public sphere was not only an institution of ongoing civic action, but that it was foundational. The men of the American revolution constituted a new world order because they understood that "power came into being when and where people would get together and bind themselves through promises, covenants, and mutual pledges...(1963, 180-181).

A clear indication of the conjunction of speaking and reading publics is evident from an analysis of the institutional geography of eighteenth century American cities. Schlesinger notes that some of the favorite Whig watering holes were the Green Dragon in Boston adjacent to the offices of the Boston Gazette and the London Merchant's Coffee House in Philadelphia right next door to the Pennsylvania Journal. As Schlesinger puts it, "at such centers, congenial spirits gathered to eat, drink, read the latest newssheets and fortify one another's prejudices. 'If the American revolution was 'cradled' in any place...it was in the urban public houses'" (1971: 33).

The revolutionary press therefore activated publics who shared similar republican ideals and fostered the emergence of a kind of intercolonial, or national, news. Needless to say, the kind of news we are talking about is ideological news--a kind of map of the political landscape which contributed to the formation of the nation. As journalism historian David Nord describes it, "perhaps the nationalists' favorite institution of national culture was the newspaper. From the Revolutionary War onward, American leaders of all political stripes talked incessantly about the need for a general 'diffusion of information'; and newspapers were always part of the plan" (1990: 395-396).

More important, newspapers continued to be geared to the citizens of a political public sphere. The activist press was born of ideology and it invited more of it, more of a participatory, reader-involved journalism. While the quality of the ideological press may have often left a lot to be desired, it was contentiously democratic. Nord submits that "people everywhere, common people, peripheral people increasingly sought their own place in the new republican society of America. Urban mechanics and artisans developed a brand of radical class-based politics...and the newspaper press had gradually come in the 1790s to reflect this pluralism" (1991: 399). Insofar as this press was successful, it owed its "prosperity" to the republican ideology which, while still exclusive, brought more and more people under the umbrella of the political public sphere.

However, it is important not to romanticize either the eighteenth century public sphere or the ideological press (see Baldasty, 1991: 409). While the public sphere was predicated upon opposition to unwarranted authority, its own composition was limited primarily to white males. Similarly, the reader postulated by the ideological press was primarily a white middle-class male.

While the bourgeois public sphere and the ideological press may have been freer than any public or press heretofore, they still bore the stamp of exclusivity. The de facto requirements for the admission, participation, or readership in each arena were property ownership, formal education, and the possession of the right gender and race (see Gouldner, 1976). Indeed, Warner points out how women were often taught reading, but not writing and so the reading that they did was male in origin (Warner, 1990: 16). The principle of publicity as control of unwarranted domination logically entailed the abolition of its own requirements, its own domination of other classes, races, and other genders. While political and legal equality has been tortuously, and in some cases torturously, won over the next two centuries in much of the West, the Enlightenment's promise of a rationally and critically debating public's self-determination remains unfulfilled. Even where contemporary publics tend to be inclusive, they often fail to satisfy their democratic potential because of informal discursive impediments enacted at the interactive level (see Fraser, 1993: 10).

Historically, the life of the vigorous and relatively unfettered public sphere, particularly as shaped and aided by the ideological newspaper, lasts only from about the last third of the eighteenth century to the transformation of the ideological press into a commercial one in the 1830s. Ironically, at the very moment when the penny press of the 1830s democratizes access to the printed word by lowering the price of a newspaper from the ideological/party papers' common cost of six cents to one cent, it simultaneously changes the character of the newspaper and the way it conceives of its audience. Consequently, the press becomes less ideological and more entertaining, less political and more human interest-oriented, less the means for the public to debate and discuss than a commodity to be consumed. In short, the commercial penny press eases access to the printed word with its volume-induced lowered sales price, but at the same time, it bleaches and decontextualizes the political while it animates the trivial, the odd, and the individual. Almost anything is fit to print as news.   Therefore, in Habermas's view, the positive widening of access to the penny press facilitated by economic ease of purchase is more than offset in a negative manner by the shaping of its content to facilitate access for broad strata psychologically. He writes that "mass culture has earned its rather dubious name precisely by achieving its increased sales through adaptation to the need for relaxation and entertainment on the part of the consumer strata with relatively little education, rather than conversely through the guidance of an enlarged public toward the appreciation of a culture undamaged in its substance" (1989: 165). This social-psychological criterion of the news supplants politics as the prime element in the penny press. The public sphere thereby loses its sense of coherence and unity because the news manufactured for a culture of consumers is fragmentary, episodic, and ahistorical--it is based on non-cumulative experience. By fostering a consumer attitude, the penny press maximized sales while depoliticizing content.

This argument is at odds with much of what John Nerone has called the mythology, or received history, of the penny press which is then positively extended forward to characterize and legitimate contemporary newspaper practices. The mythology, Nerone maintains, claims that the penny press overthrew a privileged and elitist partisan press and thus gave us the relatively unquestioned theoretical proposition that political independence is commercially grounded (1987: 399, 401).

Nerone's own position is also at odds with the seemingly revolutionary changes implied by the Habermasian argument. Nerone argues that the penny press was the evolutionary outcome of changes in particular social and cultural environments rather than the sudden discovery of fundamental human truths by penny press entrepreneurs (1987: 377; for an extended debate on this and cognate matters see Nerone, Schudson, Schiller, Shaw, and Pauly in Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 4:4, December, 1987).

The explanation why there was a shift from a participatory and citizen-based journalism with all of its warts to an advertising-dominated, public relations-oriented, and consumer-based journalism as it gets fully worked out in the twentieth century awaits further historical scholarship. In The Creation of the American Republic, Gordon Wood traces the demise of the republican emphasis on the common good and the ascendancy of individual interests to the 1780s. He maintains that the new American republicans, who were essentially anti-capitalist and at the same time natural elitists, failed to come up with a constitutional solution to the problem of differentiating representation in the two houses of state assemblies. Since they were not able to satisfactorily ground differences on economic, social, intellectual, or professional bases, they settled on the concept of the people (Wood, 1969: 400; Pocock, 1975: 516). This concept of undifferentiated people sounds democratic, but it ends up being the support system for unbridled individualism and for all of the intellectual and political baggage that individualism carries with it. It also masks differences in power and authority and is predicated on an homogenous population, premises which no longer make empirical sense, if they ever did.

Habermas's explanation of the problem stems from Lockean liberalism. According to Habermas, the problem of liberalism can be traced to the ambivalence of the individual's role in the private sphere. "As a privatized individual, the bourgeois is two things in one: both owner of goods and persons (in the patriarchal family) as well as one human being among others, that is both bourgeois and man" (1989, 79). Habermas claims that the bourgeois understanding of the public sphere was based on the fictitious identity of the two roles assumed by the privatized individuals who have come together to form a public: the role of property owners and the role of human beings pure and simple. In other words, there is a supposed equation of owners of private property with everyone else so that their interests converge with that of the freedom of the individual in general. The point is that the civil society of laissez-faire capitalism is predicated upon an even playing field of educated capitalists largely freed from governmental directives. Ideally, no commodity owner has any undue influence over prices and thus no direct power over other commodity owners. This conceptual distinction is central to the practical guarantee that private interests do not become topical concerns of the public sphere. To the extent that these distinctions made any sense nearly 200 years ago, they make much less sense today when placed in the context of oligopolistic capitalism, rather than the conceptual framework of small-scale, individual capitalists.

Schroyer's critique of Lockean liberalism is less sanguine. He argues that the Lockean tradition is not fundamentally a discourse about the common good but instead the common good is the unintended result of the market. Self-interests are conflated into common interests and, Schroyer argues, this conflation gets underwritten in the Federalists' selling of the Constitution whereby representative democracy gets smuggled in in place of participatory democracy (1985: 293-295).

Nevertheless, in the early nineteenth century, the press appeared to foster public opinion when the ideology of the Fourth Estate was worked out and it seemed to find its counterpart in the development of mass democracy during the Jacksonian era. The penny press's declaration of political independence tied to the commercial marketplace was not yet the fetter that it would be with the more fully developed industrial press of the late nineteenth century and the ascendancy of the First Amendment as a corporate right. Birkhead maintains that "partisanship continued as a wide editorial practice [and] it not only reserved the right of political commentary, but also insisted that newspapers spoke for the popular will" (1982: 112-113). However, by the late nineteenth century, the press was less rural and more urban, less communitarian and more industrial, less political and more omnibus in orientation.

The primary reasons for these changes were economic and technical and they sowed the seeds for a reduced and restricted public sphere. Vast economic expansion in the post-bellum era would put the lie to the classical liberal democratic theory. As Hofstadter notes, "in the years from Appomatox to the end of the nineteenth century, there is no other period in the nation's history when politics seemed so completely dwarfed by economic changes, none in which the life of the country rests so completely in the hands of the industrial entrepreneur" (1948: 164). This expansion was very uneven and led to severe dislocations in urban living conditions and in income distribution. This crisis brought on by industrialization was one journalism did not escape.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the cost of starting a newspaper was formidable. The technology of communication required a large capital investment. For the commercial press, volume sales and the increasing importance of advertising necessitated the organization of the newsroom in a highly efficient manner. News was becoming an established commodity through which audiences could be sold to advertisers. Not surprisingly, as Boorstin notes (1973, 28), "the advertising industry underwent significant changes and achieved substantial growth in the latter part of the nineteenth century" and the aggregate national advertising figure went from a mere $50 million in 1867 to over a half a billion in 1900.

In order to serve a potpourri of needs, reporting became more specialized and reporters were being socialized to the routines of news organizations by editor-managers whose minds were clearly attuned to market considerations. Birkhead maintains that "after 1880, the organization of the newsroom took on the literal look of an assembly line, even in the Marxian sense of the worker being separated from the finished product. With the introduction of the telephone and the typewriter, manufacturing news became even more the joint effort of narrow slices of work" (1982: 186).

Reporters' memoirs from this period are replete with traumatic accounts of the "impact of manager-editors on training young reporters in the ways and meanings of journalism" (Birkhead: 1982, 190). Theodore Dreiser tells us that the great cry in the city editorial room was "'Get the news...Don't worry much over how you get it but get it, and don't come back without it [for] the public must be entertained by the writing of reporters...The counsel of all these men was to get the news in any way possible, by hook or by crook, and to lose no time in theorizing about it" (Dreiser, 1931). In short, the imperatives of the news organization were taking precedence over everything else and the journalist was merely a component in the production process.

Journalism was just one more example of the corporate takeover of American life in the late nineteenth century. As a consequence of the shifting loci of power, the newspaper business, along with other corporate organizations, suffered the stinging criticisms of populists, progressives, and muckrakers who lashed out at political and economic corruption. With the edifice of laissez-faire economics crumbling, these critics assailed "plutocracy," "high finance,: "the interests," "big business," and "the system" (Daley, 1983: 17).

For journalism, the central question became, as press critic and muckraker Will Irwin put it in 1911, whether journalism was a profession or big business (Birkhead, 1982; Daley, 1983: 17). For muckraker and press critic Upton Sinclair the answer was clearly and unequivocally the latter. Carey describes Sinclair as a paradigmatic figure who "attempted to unmask the power, privilege, and special interests that stood behind the presumed general beneficence of both private and public institutions" (Carey, 1989b: 278). While Sinclair was an avowed socialist, he did not ground his critique in European concepts for his goal was political action to further democratic aims rather than theoretical sophistication.

Sinclair's economic and democratic critique assailed the advertising subsidy as the method by which the 'kept press' serviced the 'Empire of Business'. Furthermore, he saw prostituted journalism as the 'brass check' which enabled the industrial autocracy to maintain its hegemony over political democracy. Sinclair defined "journalism in America as the business and practice of presenting the news of the day in the interest of economic privilege" (1919: 409). These interests and the corporate press, Sinclair believed, were responsible for the commodity-like nature of the news. As he put it,

> One could take a map of America and a paint brush and make large smduges of color, representing journalistic ownership of whole districts, sometimes of whole states, by special interests. The Upper Peninsula of Michigan would be swept with a yellow smudge--that is copper. The whole state of Montana would be the same, and the greater part of Arizona. A black smudge for Southern Colorado and another in the northern part--that is coal. A gray smudge in Western Pennsylvania, and another in Illinois--that is steel. A green smudge in Wisconsin, and another in Oregon and Washington--that is lumber. A white smudge in North Dakota and Minnesota--that is the milling trust, backed by the railroads and the banks. A dirty smudge in Central California, representing 'Southern Pacific' and 'United Railways', now reinforced by 'M & M' (1919, 241).

Sinclair was even more prescient when he turned his attention to the lack of reportorial autonomy and the organizational imposition of timeliness on news values all in the name of industrial efficiency. His answer to the former was a unionized newsroom in order to humanize the operation, and, more important, in order to place control in the hands of reporters rather than property. As for timeliness as a news value, Sinclair proposed that it be dispensed with and that a reporter be given as long as necessary to get the facts (1920: 169). While Sinclair's insights on the political economy of the press, its ideological stranglehold over the newsroom, and its lack of a democratic ethos are telling and valid charges even today, they were not to carry the day in the contest over competing images of the press.

The answer to Irwin's question of whether journalism was a big business or a profession was that it was both. The ideology of professionalism served the winners in this contest and that was big business while the losers were reporters and their publics. Birkhead contends that professionalism is best understood as a discursive project "constituting a new way of looking at journalism" which legitimated the press as a corporate institution while standardizing "the role of the journalist as a production component in the mass media industry" (1982: 6-8). As professionalism gained the upper hand, it did so at the expense of the public which underwent a further narrowing of the range of discursive voices under the professional call to legitmated experts. Birkhead's characterization of the process of professionalization is instructive:

> Much of the strategy of professionalism was to offer guarantees for a more palatable news product, produced by newsmen who could be considered as components of a neutral production process. The movement toward professionalization may be viewed as dominated by this concept of the newsman as production component, with a growing ideology of objectivity, ethics to support a neutral news product of mass consumption, education and training that emphasized how the journalist fits into the news processing machine. [However] (t)hat professionalism worked to the detriment of meaningful occupational organization of working journalists while it enhanced the structural and operational stability of corporate

journalism...(1982: 237-238).

Indeed, modern newsgathering and reporting practices received their industrial imprimatur while news formulas became efficiently rountinized and canonized. As Habermas puts it, "the share of political or politically relevant news changes. Public affairs, social problems, economic matters, education, health--precisely the 'delayed reward news; is pushed into the background by 'immediate reward news'--(comics, corruption, accidents, disasters, sports, recreation, social events and human interests)..."(1989: 170). The press moves from being the means for a culture debating public to a potpourri of entertainment for a culture consuming public. A generation after the start of the penny press, William Randolph Hearst would put the icing on the cake of consumer news with his pithy comment to his reporters to give the public interesting news, not important news.

Meanwhile, journalism education arose as part of this movement to professionalization at the turn of the twentieth century. Under the aegis of the university, journalism education fostered the legitimacy of a journalism curriculum which sought scientific sanction in its fact-finding methodology and epistemological certitude in the establishment of its claim to be free from ideology (Carey, 1978; Birkhead, 1982).

Ironically, the journalistic certitude in facts in the 1920s was met by skepticism toward objectivity in the sciences. This contradiction enabled the public relations industry to promote, unashamedly, a democracy of facts and to contend that its stories were worthy of free publicity. Against this backdrop, Edward Bernays, the father of modern public relations, could, in all sincerity, stage events in order to create news.

These pseudo-events--the world of the hyper-real, then competed for the scarce resources of newspaper space with every other potential news item. Habermas calls this the refeudalization of the public sphere, meaning that concocted publicity imitates the kind of aura proper to the personal prestige and supernatural authority invested in the "representative publicness" of the ancien regime (1989: 200, 231-232). Schudson put the matter more concisely when he wrote that "public relations developed in the early part of the twentieth century as a profession which responded to, and helped shape, the public, newly defined as irrational, not reasoning; spectatorial not participant; consuming, not productive" (1978: 134).

The two clearest--yet opposed--analysts of the crisis in democracy in the 1920s were Walter Lippmann who described the public as incapable of all but the most superficial forms of democratic citizenship and later described it as a phantom and John Dewey who described a vanishing "public and its problems" (Lippmann, 1922; Dewey, 1927 see Carey, 1989a, 1989b). Lippmann's solution to what he perceived to be an impossibly high ideal of citizenship demanded by democracy and the press's inability to fulfill its part of the bargain was to install a bureau of intelligence which would organize public opinion for publics and provide a wealth of expert data for journalists to transcribe for the public. In essence, Lippmann sought to enshrine expertise, to depoliticize the public, and to diminish the intellectual role of journalists as symbol brokers. His answer to the inadequate pictures in our heads was to scientize our journalistically provided representations. His best gift to journalists was a political scientist in each one of their back pockets.

On the other hand, Dewey argues that language is not a matter of representation but instead a matter of practical activity. While science is a worthy partner in the pursuit of knowledge, it is merely one element in that conversational exchange. For Dewey, language in the pursuit of democratic goals is a socially grounded enterprise in which participants speak with each other and define the political world at the same time. To speak of language in terms of representations is to privilege a spectator's role rather than that of an engaged interlocutor (see Carey, 1989a: 78-82). If we are to reconstitute the public sphere as Dewey would have us do it, then we must examine how well the mass media contribute to our ongoing conversational dynamics.

With the ubiquity of public opinion polling today, it is a sad commentary to recall the words of Dewey's fellow symbolic interactionist, Herbert Blumer, who emphasized more than 40 years ago that public opinion pollsters do not know what they are measuring for they have ignored the fact that public opinion occurs through the interaction of groups. It is a product of conversation, not individual divination (Blumer, 1948). We will turn to the media's role in facilitating this conversation in the last section of this essay.

However, first, it is necessary to note that in the decade after Dewey's response to Lippmann in 1927, a world-wide economic depression finally put the nail in the coffin of laissez-faire economics and reversed the historical legacy of negative liberty embodied in a distrust of big government. The severity of the economic problems posed by the Great Depression rendered individual solutions and the aimless drift of laissez-faire policies to the dustbin of history. Many Americans began to question the virtues and the efficacy of capitalism. Social critics who had made the quest for freedom their battle cry in the 1920s began to call for responsibility in the 1930s (Aaron, 1961: 174).

The press in the 1930s continued on its well-established path as a big business. As an industry, it was heavily anti-Roosevelt, anti-child labor laws, and thoroughly anti-union (Daley, 1983: 104). Ironically then, after twenty years of talk about a news reporters' union by muckrakers, newspapermen gathered in New York in 1933 and organized the American Newspaper Guild (Leuchtenburg, 1963: 340). Not surprisingly given this history, the Guild was very businesslike, focusing on wages and hours while neglecting more fundamental notions of worker control and policy articulation (Daley, 1983: 104).

The thoroughly business-like nature of the mass media and their increasingly concentrated forms did not escape critical notice. In 1942, the Hutchins Commission, under the leadership of Robert Hutchins, chancellor of the University of Chicago, and with financial support from media mogul Henry Luce, set about investigating the present state and future prospects of freedom of the press. The Commission found itself stuck between the Scylla of big business and the Charybdis of possible governmental intervention.

In the dialectical tension between these polar opposites, Commission members recognized that private ownership had guaranteed the critical function of the press in the eighteenth century as small competing enterprises but that competition and private ownership had assumed new forms. As a consequence of the commercialization of the mass media, including their economic, technological, and organizational concentration, they have developed into complex social powers whereby their continued control by private ownership threatens the very function of their professed critical public role. The key to understanding the destructive role of this property bias is the simple recognition of the mass media's conception of its audiences, not as public-minded citizens, but as individuals in a mass who are anonymous, isolated, and interchangeable insofar as capitalist marketing demographics are concerned. The way to overcome this property bias, according to the Hutchins Commission, is the professional attitude of operating the media in the service of the public.

What they failed to understand is that this professional attitude is itself a product of the industrialization of the mass media. While professionalism is not always commensurate with organizational goals, it, nevertheless, fosters the very news values and sources that privilege established structures of power and authority. So, while the Commission understood that corporate power drowned out competing voices, they did not understand how professionalism could serve corporate power so well. The newsworkers' professional attitude to the public is premised on the notion of an homogenous people and a unitary public much as 18th century Federalists had spoken of the people in their effort to sell the Constitution. Hutchins Committee member Zechariah Chafee wrote that "concentration of newspapers and broadcasting stations in the hands of a wealthy group causes inadequate access to less fortunate groups, a peril to justice" (1948: 16).

While Chafee's analysis lacked practical recommendations, his philosophical position eloquently articulated an active community of discourse which recalled Dewey in his model of dialogue:

> The right to speak implies a readiness to listen and give consideration to what the other man says. A community is a universe of discourse in which members participate by speaking and listening, writing and reading. In a free community the members establish and re-establish, examine and re-examine, in response to one another, their formulations of man's ultimate ends, the standards of their behavior, and their application to concrete issues. Thus, the society in a continuous enterprise of inquiry and discussion gropes its way through changing tasks amd conditions; the individual, even if not free from the pressures of his own circumstances, can feel 'free' by participating in that enterprise (1948: 21).

This interactive model of community discourse implied that participation inside and outside of the mass media ought to enhance political democracy and a feeling for some control over one's destiny, even though economic dependencies may put obstacles in one's path (Daley, 1983: 125). The question Chaffee and fellow Hutchins Commission members failed to address was how to get to such a state of affairs. After all, this was the very eclipsed public whose loss Dewey had lamented twenty years before.

The answer to this question was a commonplace in the 1950s. It was pluralism. As a theory of society and a theory of how power worked in America, proponents of pluralism held that there were a plethora of more or less competitive and equal groups to which membership was more or less open. No one of these groups held a preponderance of power and indeed; these groups held each other in check while at the same time providing arenas for the expression of opinion.

Communication scholarship was no stranger to this theory. Opinion formation and personal influence studies further reduced the interactive dimensions of community discourse and then chimerically aggregated and interpreted individual reactions and attitudes to levels of statistical significance. Against this strongly held theory of society, C. Wright Mills offered the counterclaim that large social, political, and economic structures and organizations were run for and by elites. In short, Mills saw citizens "organized" into forms of dependent pseudo-participation in all aspects of their existence and saw political activity offered to mass-produced individuals as the consumption of conformity. Mills succinctly offered his appraisal:

> The rise of the mass media, especially radio and motion pictures had already been accompanied by an immense enlargement of the scale of economic and political institutions, and by the apparent relegation of primary face-to-face relationships to secondary place. Institutions become centralized and authoritarian; and media markets gain ascendancy over primary publics. There is again an historical parallel between the commodity market in the economic sphere and the public of public opinion, In brief, there is a movement from widely scattered little powers and laissez-faire to concentrated power and attempts at monopoly control from powerful centers...in both centers, economic and opinion, power is partially hidden; they are centers of manipulation as well as of authority...mass advertisement replaces the personal influence between customer and merchant...Entire brackets of professions and industries are in the 'opinion business,' impersonally manipulating the public for hire (1963: 581).

The historical record of the 1960s offers the civil rights movement, the free speech movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement, and the beginning of the women's liberation movement and the environmental movement as evidence to support Mills' thesis. If there had been groups available for people to express their views with like-minded others, then there would have been no need for the disenfranchised, the alienated, and the powerless to take to the streets to claim and reclaim democratic values and beliefs. Nor would there have been reason for these marginalized and alienated people to start hundreds of underground publications. Indeed, even within mainstream journalism, a new genre of reporting called new journalism eschewed any claims to objectivity and implicitly acknowledged that facts and the stories which they constitute are always implicated in values and beliefs.

Had he not died in 1962, Mills might have argued that the mass media had failed to provide appropriate democratic role models in the late 1960s. Indeed, in The Power Elite, Mills noted that "the media provide much information and news about what is happening in the world but they do not often enable the listener or the viewer to connect his larger life with these daily realities. They do not connect the information they provide on public issues with the trouble felt by the individual" (1956: 314-315).

Among the youth, the crises in values were part and parcel of identity dilemmas that, for many, found temporary haven in the anti-war movement. The anti-war movement, however, was not guided by an ideology which threatened fundamental social structures of power and authority. The dissent was organized and sometimes articulate but it tended to manifest itself in one-dimensional politics.

This fragmentation continued to breed political and social divisiveness in the 1970s as people's faith in democratic institutions waned. The mass media were no exception to this downward spiral in public confidence, albeit the work of investigative journalists Woodward and Bernstein caused a temporary blip against the mass media malaise. By the end of the 1970s a fine group of journalists and editors formed an organization calling itself Investigative Reporters and Editors, leaving an outsider to wonder what that moniker implied with respect to the capabilities of the rest of the profession.

The Reagan era of deregulation meant a further concentration of economic power in the mass media industry and a continued dimunition in the number of voices contributing to journalistic narratives. Hard-hitting television documentaries, with the exception of PBS, have all but disappeared and the complexities of an interdependent global world are still relayed to us in quick, often disconnected sound bites, in 22 1/2 minutes on the nightly network news. The mass media have themselves become schizophrenic in their analysis of their own performance. Ever vigilant in their roles as watchdogs over government, they at the same time have begun to monitor their own sound bites, recognizing that articulating their roles as watchdogs cannot be meaningfully accomplished in 8 seconds bursts. They have also exhibited some critical self-reflexiveness in their reliance on polls and the horse race character of their political reporting. This schizophrenia is, however, merely symptomatic of the much more fundamental dilemma of how social knowledge and social experience are possible at the primary group level that defines the necessarily conflicted conversations in public arenas.

In this last section, then, we propose to evaluate contemporary media on theoretical grounds and in doing so, we will make some necessarily arguable presuppositions as to what it is we, as a society, think it is worth doing. As Hardt puts it:

> Specifically, the study of mass communication can make sense only in the context of a theory of society ; thus questions of freedom and control of expression, of public and private spheres of communication, and of a

> democratic system of communication must be raised as part of an attempt to define the position of individuals in contemporary industrialized Western societies...It is equally important to address individual concerns for identity and self-respect in the process of societal communication (Hardt, 1979: 35).

As we suggested at the outset, the question of a democratic system of communication means addressing the classic concept of the public. The republican legacy of our founding fathers with their firm ideological foci on the common good is a necessary, albeit insufficient, starting point for our analysis. We also need to restore the historical continuity of the propagandistic analysis of the party press with that of the muckraking tradition.

Drawing upon Habermas, Scheidges notes that the eighteenth century bourgeois public "stands and falls with (is the incorporation of) the principle of common access. A public sphere in which specific parts of society are excluded is, not only a partial public, but not a public at all" (Scheidges, 1979, 43-44). While this ideal claim was never met, the present configuration of the mass media has taken us even further away from its realization, leading Habermas to conclude that these "democratic ideas are only residues of the early bourgeois society [which] serve only as legitimizing ideologies, and no longer as organizing principles" (Scheidges, 1979, 63).

The commercial press, grounded in profit and self-interest, is in the business of producing mainstream values under the consensual tent of an homogenous and unitary public. It owes its historical grounding to Lockean self-interest and the metaphor of the marketplace of ideas. Of course a commercial marketplace and a marketplace of ideas are contradictions in terms, for the former will supply us with popular ideas and ideas which elite sources and audiences find commercially and ideologically palatable. The supply of ideas stops at this double bind (Entman, 1989: 22). The commercial press cannot consistently give us alternative subcultural voices because of the limitations of a consensual normative order presupposed by the professional norm of objectivity and underwritten by the exigencies of a capitalist institution.

Here, Habermas's ideal speech situation, with its structures and preconditions, is instructive in giving us a basis of criticizing the mass media. The ideal speech situation is important because it takes the communicative process on its own terms--the grounds of interaction--and thereby avoids the isolating tendencies of so much mass-mediated communication. Communicative analysis must address itself to this individuating isolation (Daley, 1983, 221).

To put it in more concrete terms, we can follow Touraine's point that in a progressively more tertiary society--"one in which the treatment of information plays the same central role that the treatment of natural resources played at the beginning of industrialization--the most serious form of waste is the lack of participation in decision-making...Being informed means more than merely knowing what is taking place. It means being familiar with the background, reasons, and methods, which lead to a decision and not merely with the reasons alleged to justify it" (Touraine, 1971, 62). The tie to Habermas is direct for his ideal speech situation assumes the treatment of information in which ideas are resources for humankind in rational intersubjective acts shaping the world--the actual societies we inhabit as individual subjects and as social beings.

Essentially, our argument holds that while existing communicative analysis begins by describing communication as social, it is almost always written from the standpoint of the intentioning self or the normative order of society. If we analyze communication from the standpoint of the individual or some pre-given society or some selective combination of the two, we deprive the analysis of any real basis in social action. Journalists under the commercial press system assume a normative order to the world which removes subaltern voices from the realm of news values except when they are caught up in human or natural disasters. Furthermore, this assumption of a normative order reproduces that order on the grounds of the symbiosis between reporters and elite sources.

On the other hand, Habermas's ideal speech situation examines how validity claims are raised in speech situations according to three criteria: truth, veracity, and normative rightness. However, an ideal speech situation implies an ideal social situation, a situation free of arbitrary constraint on communication. If we judge the mass media against these criteria, mediated communication as presently constituted fails on at least three grounds.

First, mediated communication is typified by arbitrary restraint on the ways that news gets made as elucidated in the work of Tuchman, Fishman, and Hall. Second, even if we disregard these restraints, it fails on interaction grounds, on the grounds of an analysis of how the the press constitutes others and is thus relatively closed to processes of mutuality and reciprocity.

Habermas's own argument falls short here for it does not explain how normatively different cultural orders get voiced. As Fraser correctly notes, Habermas' conception "assumes that a public sphere is or can be a space of zero-degree culture, so utterly bereft of any specific ethos as to accommodate with perfect neutrality and equal ease interventions expressive of any and every cultural ethos" (Fraser, 1993: 11).

Rather than bracketing inequalities in an ideal speech situation or educating reporters to the ideology of objectivity, we ought to foster the constitution of publics and journalistic orientations which make power and status differences thematic. The mass media become relevant to citizens' lives when they enable their voices to be heard on the grounds of the felt quality of their lives. Bleaching news narratives of difference and affect privileges the narrative of the established order under the guise of rational and objective discursive practices.

Third, even if the first two sources of restraint are absent, the media transform the process whereby knowledge, truth, and experience are formed in a sociopolitical context. Here professional journalistic norms are grounded in assumptions of complexity and the concomitant need for requisite scientific expertise. These norms and assumptions limit debate and produce monopolies of interpretation. They also prohibit the co-determination of meaning through the negotiation and the production of news narratives from multiple points of view. The journalistic fascination with the present turns contemporary events and personalities into mere bric a brac whereby issues and events are devoid of the kind of context fundamental to an understanding of historical pre-understandings.

If the press is to regain its historic discursive functions and if is to be responsive to multicultural publics, then it must be reconstituted in the traditions of civic virtue and the propagandistic functions of mcukraking. In short, the press must become more political and less commercial. But it is not enough that the press be decommercialized and repoliticized. The newsroom must itself be democratized, not simply in some affirmative action mix, but in terms of the very discursive practices by which news gets made. The industrial news formulas must be discarded and, in their place, what gets thematized as news must itself be discursively articulated inside and outside the newsroom in a manner which problematizes the contested nature of multicultural politics. Anything less condemns the news media to the historical dustbin of the trivial.

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The Black Press And The 1970 Trinidadian Black Power Revolt - An Examination Of The New Pittsburgh Courier

By

Lisa A. Mc Clean

A paper presented to the minority division of the annual AEJMC Convention, August 10-13, 1994, Atlanta.

ABSTRACT

This paper examined how one black newspaper - the New Pittsburgh Courier - covered the social disturbances, which occurred in 1970 on the island of Trinidad, a predominantly black Developing county. The coverage given by the New Pittsburgh Courier was also compared with that given by the New York Times, in an attempt to determine differences in coverage of a crisis in a black foreign country by the black and white press in the U.S.. This study found that coverage by the New Pittsburgh Courier was sparse and inaccurate, when compared to the coverage of the New York Times. The New Pittsburgh Courier unavailability of both financial and human resources were cited as some of the reasons for that newspaper's inadequate coverage of the 1970 disturbances in Trinidad.

Note. Lisa A. Mc.Clean is a doctoral candidate in the School of Telecommunications, Ohio University.

The Black Press And The 1970 Trinidadian Black Power Revolt - An Examination Of The New Pittsburgh Courier.

Introduction

For the first time since its August 1962 independence, the government of the twin-island republic of Trinidad and Tobago was faced with a serious socio-political crisis. During February 1970, and on several occasions during the months of March and April, the streets of its capital -- Port of Spain -- were filled with demonstrators demanding, among other things, an end to that island's white minority control of the country's economic wealth[1]. The situation became so tense that on April 21, Prime Minister Eric Williams declared a state of emergency on the island. A takeover of the military base by some soldiers led him to purchase arms from the Nixon administration in an effort to alleviate this crisis[2].

These disturbances of 1970 -- later called the Trinidadian Black Power revolt -- was covered by a number of newspapers in the U.S.. Dennis Gordon[3], in a brief overview of how the events were covered by the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post, noted that the New York Times gave more coverage to the disturbances than these other two newspapers. Further, that the coverage by the New York Times was extensive in April and included an editorial warning the United States against intervening in the affairs of Trinidad. In explaining why the disturbances were covered, Gordon argued that the Trinidadian black-power demonstrations "struck a strong chord" among readers in the United States, who had "witnessed the evolution of the civil rights movement and the emergence of militant organization like the Black Panther Party[4]." Although he had concluded that this social unrest in Trinidad received "significant coverage from United States newspapers," Gordon's study was based solely on an examination of the white press; the coverage given by the black press[5] of the Trinidadian crisis was not included in his study. Given that a Caribbean[6] version of the North American black-power ideology was responsible for the outbreak of the violence in 1970, it would be interesting to see how these Trinidadian disturbances were covered by the black press. Was the coverage extensive? Did it provide readers with a complete picture of the events and their causes? Further, was the coverage given by the black press any different from that given by the white press, and if yes, why?

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[1]. Scott MacDonald, Trinidad And Tobago, Democracy And Development In The Caribbean, (London, Praeger Press, 1986), 163.

[2]. Ivar Oxall, Race And Revolutionary Consciousness, A Documentary Interpretation Of The 1970 Black Power Revolt In Trinidad,(Cambridge, M.A., Schenkman Publishing Co. Inc., 1971), 38.

[3]. Dennis Gordon, "Media Images Of The Caribbean In The U.S. - From Black Power Revolt To The Muslimeen Uprising," Caribbean Affairs, October-December, 1991, 36-37.

This study examines how one black newspaper - the New Pittsburgh Courier - covered these 1970 disturbances in Trinidad. Founded in 1910, the New Pittsburgh Courier is one the oldest black newspapers with general distribution. This weekly paper was chosen because it has focused on news about black people in both the United States and in the African diaspora[7]. In addition, in 1970, the New Pittsburgh Courier could still be considered as one of the Black elite newspapers because it ranked sixth in the list of top twenty-five black newspapers in 1970[8]. Building on Gordon's study[9], the author also attempted to compare the coverage of the New Pittsburgh Courier with that of the New York Times. Issues of both newspapers printed between February 26 and July 31 of 1970 were examined; these dates represented the beginning of the first major protest in 1970 and the lifting of the state of emergency, respectively. The author also conducted telephone interviews with former editors of the Pittsburgh Courier[10].

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[4]. Ibid., 37.

[5]. The term black Press is used in this paper to mean newspapers that are owned, produced and intended for the black population. It is being distinguished from the white press, which Roland Woiseley, in his the Black Press, U.S.A. (Iowa, Iowa University Press, 1990), 6, noted is concerned with the "problems of whites, the majority group readers, and only incidentally with [the concerns] of blacks, orientals and other minority groups.

[6]. The term Caribbean refers to the English-speaking Caribbean in this paper. It will be used synonymously with the term West Indian.

[7]. Wolseley, The Black Press U.S.A., 68.

Background

The 1970 Trinidadian Black Power Revolt

Scholars examining the 1970 Trinidadian Black-Power revolt have identified the socio-economic conditions of Black Trinidadians and the ideology of black power, as the key causes of the disturbances. MacDonald[11] for example, noted that although by 1970 Black Trinidadians made up the majority population of that island's multi-ethnic society, economic power was being welded by the local whites, who were in the minority. In addition, foreign-owned white multi-national corporations were also controlling a significant part of the island's economic wealth; this situation prevailed even though the country was governed by a black administration. He linked this socio-economic plight of Black-Trinidadians with the disturbances which occurred in 1970.

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[8]. L. F. Palmer, "The Black Press In Transition," Columbia Journalism Review, Spring, 1970, 35.

[9]. Gordon, "Media Images Of The Caribbean In The U.S - From The Black Power Revolt To The Muslimeen Uprising."

[10]. Wolseley noted that when the newspaper was established in 1910, its name was the Pittsburgh Courier; after it was taken over by the Chicago Defender in 1968, the name changed to the New Pittsburgh Courier. Interviews were conducted with one of the editors of the former Pittsburgh Courier and with the editor of New Pittsburgh Courier in 1970.

[11]. MacDonald, Trinidad And Tobago, Democracy And Development In The Caribbean, 163.

These disturbances have also been placed within the wider context of a black-power movement which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s in Trinidad and in other islands. As far as Trinidad was concerned, MacDonald[12] noted that by 1969, black power ideology had infiltrated the academic circles of the Trinidadian branch of the University of the West Indies. Its advocates were, to some extent, influenced by the 1960s North American black-power ideology; indeed, one of the renown black-power advocates in the United States in the 1960s and s was Trinidadian born Stokely Carmichael. Carmichael had been invited by black-power activists in Trinidad to visit that country, however, the Trinidadian government denied him entry[13].

The movement was also rooted in a particular notion of what black power meant to the Caribbean. One of the early black-power advocates in the Caribbean - Guyanese-born Walter Rodney - argued that Caribbean black-power meant a "break with imperialism, which is historically white racist, the assumption of power by the black masses in the islands, and cultural reconstruction of the society in the images of the blacks[14]." Similar views were being expressed by black power activists in other islands[15].

Thus the socio-economic conditions of Black-Trinidadians, along with the ideology of Black-power were catalysts for the disturbances that occurred in 1970.

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[12]. Ibid.

[13]. Oxall, Race And Revolutionary Consciousness, A Documentary Interpretation Of The 1970 Black Power Revolt In Trinidad, 21.

[14]. Anthony Payne, Politics In Jamaica, (New York, St, Martin's Press, 1988), 22.

[15]. Lisa Mc.Clean. A History Of the Black Power Movement In Barbados, (Unpublished undergraduate thesis, University Of The West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, 1989).

The Disturbances

Although the black-power revolt occurred in 1970, Oxall[16], who gave a detailed account of the events in his Race And Revolutionary Consciousness, noted that the disturbances can be traced back to as early as 1969. In 1969 a number of students of St. Augustine's campus protested the arrest of some West Indian students, who were involved in the destruction of a computer center at George Washington University in Montreal, Canada. Out of this protest, the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC) - which played a leading role in spearheading the 1970 protest - was born.

During the first four months of 1970, the streets of Trinidad's capital - Port of Spain - were characterized by both violent and non-violent protest. In February, the joviality of the Trinidadian carnival was tainted by a number of protest banners highlighting the plight of black Trinidadians; some supporters of black-power ideology also carried large portraits of U.S. black-power advocates, Eldridge Cleaver, Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael. On 26 February, two hundred university students staged a demonstration at the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Port of Spain. There were also demonstrations at the Canadian High Commission in Port of Spain, and at the Trinidadian branch of the Royal Bank of Canada. These protests were against the conspiracy charges made by the Canadian government of the West Indian students, who had been arrested in 1969 because of the George Washington University affair. The month of March was also characterized by protest. On March 4 there was a "Black Power" march involving over 10,000 people through the streets of Port of Spain. This march, led by the leader of the NJAC, Geddes Granger, paraded from Woodford Square to Shanty Town. By March 8, the situation had further deteriorated: There were riots, bombings and looting of banks and stores in

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[16]. Oxall, Race And Revolutionary Consciousness, A Documentary Interpretation Of The 1970 Black Power Revolt In Trinidad, 62-69. Note that this chronology of events was taken from Oxall's study.

Port of Spain. Among the places bombed was the residence of Frank Hagen - U.S. Vice Consul to Trinidad and Tobago. Four days later, thousands of Trinidadians -- mainly of Negro descent -- marched from Port of Spain to the sugar belt, where most of the East Indians resided and worked. The slogan of the march was "Indians and Africans Unite Now," and it was aimed at soliciting solidarity between the Trinidadians of East-Indian and Negro descent in the struggle for economic reform. The bombing of buildings continued on March 22. March 25 saw confrontations between police and a crowd in Port of Spain; this confrontation resulted in the use of tear gas by the police.

During the month of April tension in Trinidad had mounted. One of the reasons was the death of Basil Davis - one of NJAC supporters - who had been shot by the police. Protestors took the opportunity at his funeral to lash out at the government and at the members of the middle class, who worked for the foreign companies. There was also a strike of 600 daily paid workers at the Brechin Castle sugar factory. On April 21, Prime Minister Williams, in an attempt to abort a proposed joint demonstration of the NJAC and union members, declared a state of emergency in Trinidad and arrested fifteen members of the black-power movement. The state of emergency, however, did not stop the unrest: On that same day, buildings in downtown Port of Spain were burned, there was a mutiny by some members of the 750-man Trinidadian defence force, who were allegedly sympathetic to the black-power cause. A road block by the Trinidadian coast guard of the roads leading to Port Of Spain from the military base at Chagaramus, where the soldiers had seized the arms, managed to contain them. On the next day, Prime Minister Williams arranged for the purchase of arms from the Nixon administration to re-equip the soldiers, who were loyal to his administration. This was followed by five days of negotiations between the rebel soldiers and the government. In the meanwhile, the United States sent a naval squadron to the outskirts of the Trinidadian territorial waters in case there was need to evacuate United States citizens. In May there was a gradual restoration of order in Trinidad. On July 1 1970, the state of emergency was lifted.

Coverage by the New Pittsburgh Courier

For the period under study (February 1970 to July 1970), only one article on the black-power revolt in Trinidad was found in the New Pittsburgh Courier. This finding somewhat surprised the author, who had expected that the New Pittsburgh Courier to give more coverage of the event, given the link with the black-power in the United States. The sole article in the New Pittsburgh Courier was entitled "**Race, Economics Back of Rioting In Trinidad**." It was found on page two of the May 2 edition of the paper - the page where the international news stories were usually found.

This report called the events a "people power" revolt. It stated that a "people power revolt [had] threatened to draw a U.S. Marine-loaded helicopter carrier and a landing ship into the rioting." It also mentioned that some members of the army had seized the arms and ammunition at the U.S. military base in Chagaramus. Quoting a BBC report, the story also stated that a sixteen-year-old bystander and an army private were killed when members of the "people power" were being arrested. The story noted that the "power people" were calling for "expulsion of foreign capitalists installations," and that "more than seventy power people had been arrested." The remainder of the news report gave some background information about Trinidad's racial composition and its independence.

Coverage by the New York Times

Compare to sparse coverage given by the New Pittsburgh Courier, the New York Times coverage seemed quite extensive. Like the findings of Gordon's study, this study also found a total of fifteen articles on the Trinidadian crisis between February and July. Accompanied by a map indicating the location of Trinidad, the first news story was seen in the March 9 edition, on page 11. The story, 'Fire Bombs Strike Home Of U.S. Aid," described the demonstrations that had occurred the week prior in Port Of Spain. Another article was printed two days later, on March 11 on page 12. This article "Indians In Trinidad Urged Not To March," noted that the East Indian union leader, Bhadase Sagan Maraj, had urged Trinidadian of East Indians descent not to join in the protest with the black Trinidadians.

Like Gordon, this author also found that coverage of the disturbances was extensive in the latter half of April. The first article in April occurred on April 22 - the day after the state of emergency was declared in Trinidad. Occurring on page 1 of the newspaper and continuing on page four, this story --" Black-Power Mob Riots In Trinidad" -- described the violence in Port of Spain, which had led to the declaration of the state of emergency. On the following day three articles occurred on the Trinidadian crisis: They were found on page 1, page 10 and on page 23. The first article --"U.S. Plane Flies In Arms As Trinidad Fights Mutiny", described the arrest of fifty-eight black-power advocates. It also noted that the U.S flew in a plane load of weapons on the request of the Trinidadian government, and that West Indian students were demonstrating in Washington against any U.S. intervention. The article on page 10 -- "Militants Arrested" -- reviewed the causes of the disturbances, and the article on April 23 -- "Trouble In Trinidad" -- was an editorial urging the U.S not to intervene in Trinidad.

On April 24 two articles on page 1 dealt with the Trinidadian crisis. One article -- "Black-Power Flourishing In The Caribbean" -- described the spread of the black-power movement across the Caribbean. The other report -- "Trinidad Presses Mutiny Talks As Dissents Are Rounded Up"-- noted that the Trinidadian government was continuing negotiations with the army mutineers, as the police continued to round up anti-government activists. Coverage continued on April 25 with three news stories on the crisis. They were found on pages 1 and 8, respectively. The article on page 1 -- "Trinidad Reports Control Restored" -- reported that Trinidadian's government was continuing its negotiation with the rebel soldiers. The other report -- "Foreign Ships Ordered Out" -- reported that Prime Minister Williams had ordered all foreign ships to leave Trinidad's territorial waters. The report on page 8 -- "What Caribbean Black-Power Means" -- described the origins of Caribbean Black-power ideology.

After April 25, coverage of the Trinidadian affair ceased to appear on page 1, however coverage continued. On April 26 page 34, a news report entitled "Mutiny In Trinidad Appears To Be Over," noted that despite Williams' orders, U.S ships still remained fifty to sixty miles off-shore. Another article appeared on section four page 4 of this April 26 edition; this news report -- "Black-Power Threatens a Black-Led Nation" -- reviewed the events since February. Coverage continued on April 27 with a report on page 15 -- "Trinidad Appoints Panel To Investigate Disturbances" -- which noted that a committee had been established in Trinidad to investigate the mutiny. Other news reports pertaining to the crisis were found on May 11 page 45 and on May 15 page 55. The article on May 11 --" Trinidad Revamps Cabinet" -- noted that because of the black-power revolt, Prime Minister Williams had reshuffled his cabinet. The May 15 article -- "Trinidad Ownership Of Industry Urged" -- quoted the Trinidadian ambassador to the U.S., Ellis Clarke, as saying that the policy in Trinidad will be to encourage local ownership of industry because of the events that had occurred on the island.

Comparison of coverage

More Comprehensive coverage

Undoubtedly, coverage of these two papers cannot be adequately compared because of the disparity in the number of articles published by the New York Times, compared to the one article published by the New Pittsburgh Courier. However, what is clear is that readers of the New York Times received a more comprehensive picture of the disturbances than that those of the New Pittsburgh Courier. They received a more comprehensive picture in the sense that the New York Times not only described the events, but in went a step further than the New Pittsburgh Courier by indicating the reasons for their occurrence, as well as identifying some of the key players. The news reports occurring in April noted that economic factors, as well the ideology of black power were responsible for these disturbances of 1970. For example, the reports on April 23 page 1 and 8, noted that economic factors, namely the rising unemployment rate among black Trinidadians and the concentration of wealth in the hands of the island's minority population were responsible for the disturbances. This was also true of the report on April 24 page 1, which noted that although the battle cry was "black power," that given the economic situation of black Trinidadians, the disturbances would still have been inevitable.

The ideology of Black-power was also identified as another cause of the revolt by reports in the New York Times. For example, the report "**Black-Power Flourishing In The Caribbean,**" surveyed the growth of Black-power movement in the English-speaking Caribbean and identified the reasons for its development. Reasons such as the problem of cultural inferiority among Caribbean blacks, and disappointment with how the black governments of the Caribbean were dealing with the economic situation were identified. Similarly, the report entitled "**What Caribbean Black Power Means,**" sought to place the events within the context of black-power. It reported that the Caribbean black-power activists were young people who had been educated in North America and Britain, and whose philosophy was derived from the following sources: Black militants in the U.S. black power movement, African socialist philosophy called ujamaa, West Indian activists' philosophy, the philosophy of Cuban and Algerian revolutionaries, and from the philosophy of

Marxism. In addition to these, the report "**Black Power Threatens A Black Led Nation**", also placed the events within their economic and ideological context.

This contextualizing of the events did not occur in the article published in the New Pittsburgh Courier. Readers were given some sense of what had occurred, but the context was not made clear. As was noted previously, the expression used in that article was "people power" instead of black-power; this expression --"power people" -- does not make explicit to readers that the disturbances were, at least at the leadership level, grounded in a Caribbean ideology of black power, and an ideology, which also had connections with black-power ideology in the United states. Neither was it made clear that the economic plight of black Trinidadians was also responsible for the outbreak of the disturbances.

Further, unlike the reports New York Times, such the story "**Trinidad Presses Mutiny Talks As Dissents Are Rounded Up,**" which identified some of the key players in these disturbances, the report in the New Pittsburgh Courier, gave no idea of who were the players in these disturbances. The leaders of the Trinidadian black-power movement and their supporters are nameless, faceless people of no particular ethnic origin. That is, the report did not inform the readers that most of the leaders of the revolt were black intellectuals, and that those who supported it were mainly young, unemployed or under-employed black Trinidadians, who were suffering economically in almost the same way as were black Americans living in the United States.

Thus, when compared to the New Pittsburgh Courier, the New York Times gave its readers a thorough picture of the disturbances in Trinidad than did the New Pittsburgh Courier. Its reports not only identified the key players, but they also provided the reasons for the outbreak of violence in 1970. In addition, the information in its reports were accurate unlike the information in the New Pittsburgh Courier. The New Pittsburgh Courier inaccurately termed the event a "people-power" revolt. It also noted incorrectly that the revolt had "threatened to draw a U.S. Marine loaded helicopter carrier and landing ship to [Trinidad]." In actual fact, by the time the report was printed, the U.S naval squadron was already in Trinidad's waters, and the Nixon administration had already sold the arms to the Trinidadian government.

Reasons for poor coverage

Why was the New Pittsburgh Courier unable to provide a more detailed and accurate report of these disturbances is a question that must be examined within a broader context of what was happening to the black press by 1970.

Financial problems

Unlike the white elite press, the black press had declined in circulation and many newspapers were facing problems getting advertisers[17]. The New Pittsburgh Courier was one such newspaper undergoing these problems. In 1945 it was one of the top three black newspapers in the United States, with a national circulation of 257,000; by 1970 its national circulation had dropped to 48,798[18]. The newspaper was undergoing a financial metamorphosis because of the decline in circulation and the problems encountered with obtaining advertisers. Editor of the New Pittsburgh Courier in 1970, Carl Morris, noted that these financial problems had implications for the nature of news stories which were being reported in the New Pittsburgh Courier. For one thing, the number of national and foreign news stories had to be reduced and emphasis was being placed on more local news stories. Because of these financial difficulties, the paper simply could not afford to carry news stories outside of the Pittsburgh area[19].

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[17]. Wolseley, The Black Press U.S.A., 338.

[18]. L. F. Palmer, "The Black Press In Transition," 31.

Staffing Problems

Another reality of the black press by 1970 was that they were experiencing staffing problems. The problem of small staffs was further aggravated by the rapid turnover of staff. During the civil rights riots in the U.S. the white press began to hire many of the staff away from the black press; attracted by the higher wages, many black journalists went over to these newspapers. Again, the New Pittsburgh Courier was one of the black newspapers facing these staffing problems. Unlike the Pittsburgh Courier of the 1930's and the 1940's, which had stringers in the Caribbean islands writing news stories for the paper, the New Pittsburgh Courier of the 1970's did not have these resources[20]. Morris noted that the newspaper did not even have a staff to do foreign correspondence; neither did it have a foreign editor. Any foreign news which the paper obtained was sent to it by the Chicago Defender, which after 1968 had taken over ownership of the New Pittsburgh Courier. The Chicago Defender did summaries of foreign news that it obtained from UPI[21]. Thus, the New Pittsburgh Courier was engaging 'double' borrowing foreign news stories: It obtained foreign news from the Chicago Defender, which had obtained its foreign news from another source. This could explain the inadequate report which the New Pittsburgh Courier, gave to the events and why some of the details were inaccurate. It could also account for the fact that there was only one story on the Trinidadian revolt of 1970 in the New Pittsburgh Courier.

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[19] Telephone Interview, Carl Morris, Editor of the New Pittsburgh Courier, 1970. March 1, 1994.

[20] Telephone Interview, Frank Bolden, former reporter and editor of the Pittsburgh Courier. February 24, 1994. Telephone Interview, Carl Morris, Editor of New Pittsburgh Courier. March 1, 1994.

[21] Telephone Interview, Carl Morris, Former Editor of The New Pittsburgh Courier, March 1, 1994.

Change in objectives

In addition to these, the coverage can also be explained in terms of a general change in editorial objectives by 1970. Frank Bolden, editor of the Pittsburgh Courier during the 1940s, has noted that the editors of Pittsburgh Courier of the 1930's and 1940's were concerned about the plight of black people anywhere in the African diaspora and in continental Africa. One of the reasons for this concern was that some of them, like him, had friends in the United States, who were from the West Indies and continental Africa. Thus, they developed an interest in the affairs of black people from these places. In addition, it was economically viable to target these black non-American populations. Bolden noted that in the 1930's and the 1940's the West Indian population in the U.S. had a higher income than African-Americans, and the former use to support the newspaper. In addition, editions of the Pittsburgh Courier were sent to the West Indies, thus it was wise to coverage of news from these area in the Pittsburgh Courier. Carl Morris, noted that by 1970 the objectives of the New Pittsburgh Courier had changed because of its decline of circulation and problems with obtaining advertising. He noted that the objective of the paper in 1970, was to publish news stories which would rebuild the local readers' interest in the newspaper; therefore, instead of publishing foreign and national news stories, the newspaper sought to concentrate on local news, which would attract the readers in Pittsburgh.

Conclusion

Traditional explanations of western press coverage, or lack of coverage of events in foreign countries posit that the western press tend to give coverage to events in foreign countries if these events are sensational, strange or exotic[22]. It has also been argued that coverage of events in foreign countries depends on how culturally proximate the foreign country is to the reporting country[23]. Most of these explanations are based on examination of coverage of events in foreign countries by the white press. What this study has shown is that with minority newspapers, such as the New Pittsburgh Courier there are a number of other factors to be taken into account in explaining coverage, or lack of coverage given to events in foreign countries . As has been shown with the coverage given by the New Pittsburgh Courier of the disturbances that occurred in Trinidad, factors such as the availability of both human and financial resources, as well as the objectives of the media organization at the time, also determine how events in foreign countries are covered by minority newspapers.

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[22]. Narinder Aggarwala, "News With A Third World perspective," in P. Horton, Third World News And Press Freedom, (New York, Praeger Press, 1978). 197-209.

[23]. See for example Johan Galtung, "The Structure of Foreign News: a presentation of The Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Foreign Newspapers," in Media Sociology: A Reader, (ed) Jeremy Tunstall (Urbana, Il, University Of Illinois Press, 1970) 291.

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ABSTRACT

NEWS VALUES AND THE OPPRESSED:
U.S. NEWS AND THE BRAZILIAN STREET CHILDREN, 1989-1993

The paper applies the standards of a humane, just journalism to U.S. reporting on the plight of Brazilian street children, 6,000 of whom have been murdered by death squads. Four news media -- "ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings," the New York Times, Time and Newsweek -- are examined over a five-year period, 1989 to 1993. The paper considers the coverage within the context of traditional international news values and evaluates the coverage in terms of the standards of a journalism of social justice.

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NEWS VALUES AND THE OPPRESSED:
U.S. NEWS AND THE BRAZILIAN STREET CHILDREN, 1989-1993

On the night of July 23, 1993, on the dark streets of downtown Rio de Janeiro, two cars stopped in front of the city's historic Candelaria Church where more than 40 homeless boys and girls were sleeping outside its massive walls. Hooded men stepped from the cars, approached the sleeping children and opened fire with pistols. Four boys died as they slept. Another was shot and killed as he ran. Two more were severely wounded. Leaving the scene, the men drove the short distance to the Museum of Modern Art, on Rio's famed Seaside Avenue. In the gardens around the museum, more homeless children slept. Again, the men opened fire, killing two more boys. Three days later, three military policemen were arrested for the murders. On the same day, one of the injured youths died bringing the death toll that night to eight.

The killings were reported widely in the U.S. press, along with U.S. and Brazilian reactions of outrage and shock. The reporting on the killings, however, made it clear that the murder of street children in Brazil had been occurring daily for years. Indeed, more than 6,000 youths had been murdered on the streets of Brazil in the last five years. Had the U.S. news media previously reported on the years of killings? Or had the deaths of the children somehow fallen outside U.S. requisites for newsworthiness?

Such questions lead directly to the consideration of international news values, a subject of much debate in the post-Cold War era (Hallin, 1987; O'Heffernan, 1992; Vanden Heuvel, 1993; Van Dijk, 1988). As Hallin (1987, p. 23) notes, "The Cold War perspective, which once organized virtually all foreign affairs coverage into an ideological picture supportive of American world hegemony now no longer does so." Vanden Heuvel (1993, p. 19) writes:

> The end of the Cold War has opened new horizons for the American media, but embedded in that wider perspective is the problem of making sense of a world in which change is the only constant. The old criteria for covering foreign affairs on the East-West confrontation model -- and many of the old standards of newsworthiness -- don't apply in a post-Cold War model. But U.S. foreign policy-makers have yet to offer a new framework for understanding the world, leaving the media adrift without guidance.

No dominant framework -- or metanarrative (Hallin, 1987) -- stands ready to replace the organizing and authorizing powers of the Cold War model. Thus in this rudderless context, journalists and academics have proposed numerous frameworks for understanding how U.S. news media might cover the world. Some see the media still driven by U.S. foreign policy (Hallin, 1987; Berry, 1990).[1] Some see overarching topics, particularly economics, as organizing frameworks (Gwertzman, 1993; Hoge, 1993).[2] Others see the opportunity for a global, human journalism that gives overdue attention to the suffering of people who fell unnoted outside the media's former Cold War framework (Galtung and Vincent, 1992; Traber, 1993).[3]

This latter view has roots deep within the literature of journalism ethics. Long before the demise of the Cold War, media critics and ethicists called upon journalists to reconsider the frameworks by which they judge people and events worthy of news coverage. Often using the 1947 Hutchins Report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press (1947) as a touchstone and the social justice philosophy of John Rawls (1971) as a theoretical base, these critics have charged that a primary component of the "social responsibility" theory of the press is to give voice to the powerless and oppressed (Christians, 1986; Day, 1991, pp. 51-52; Lambeth, 1986, pp. 31-36). Christians (1986, pp. 110-11) writes that "justice for the powerless stands at the centerpiece of a socially responsible press" and asks, "Shouldn't the communications media be the channel of today's impoverished, so their complaints and pleas for mercy will rise above the noise of a busy and complicated nation?"

This paper will argue that this humane journalism of social justice should find a place in the vacuum of values created by the removal of the Cold War framework. Other frameworks, such as foreign policy and economics, are not challenged here. What is challenged is the media's continued neglect of the powerless and a news value canon that routinely and conventionally ignores the cry of the poor.

The purpose of this paper then is critical and evaluative. It applies the standards of a just, humane journalism to a seemingly well-suited case of reporting -- the killing of Brazilian street children. The ongoing events in Brazil contained many of the basic structural elements and news values that are requisite for U.S. press coverage (Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Gans, 1979): Much of the story has unfolded in Rio de Janeiro, an important South American media hub and home to numerous U.S. news bureaus; Brazil is a major economic and political partner with the United States; the killing of the homeless children by death squads offered drama, impact, and human interest -- all essential news values.

With these elements in place, the paper asks: Did U.S. news media find newsworthy the story of the Brazilian street children? It asks how much coverage was devoted to the killings. It asks the depth and nature of the coverage. It asks whether attempts were made to understand the fundamental inequities at the heart of the street children's travails. It asks whether the news gave voice to the street children themselves.

Specifically, the paper will first examine the call for a just, humane framework for journalism, a call made more timely by the removal of the East-West framework that governed U.S. international reporting for three decades. The plight of Brazilian street children will then be traced. Drawing upon the work of religious, relief and human rights groups, the alternative press, United Nations research and the author's own experience, the paper will offer a brief narrative of events concerning the street children of Brazil so that selection, emphases and omissions by mainstream U.S. news media can be placed in context. The paper then will move to an analysis of reporting over a five-year period, 1989 to 1993, when the killing of children was transformed from isolated incidents to a brutal campaign of extermination. Four news media will be examined: "ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings," the New York Times, Time and Newsweek. Although the sample is limited and small, these four news outlets were selected for their elite status and influence. The amount and nature of coverage given to the Brazilian street children before and after the July 1993 killings will be analyzed. Finally, the paper will consider the coverage within the context of traditional international news values and evaluate the coverage in terms of the standards of a humane and just journalism.

NEWS AND THE OPPRESSED

In the early 1940s, Henry Luce of Time, Inc. commissioned a landmark study on the role of the press. He asked Robert Hutchins, of the University of Chicago, to head the group, the Commission on Freedom of the Press (1947). In March 1947, the Commission published its report, A Free and Responsible Press, and since that time the theory of a "socially responsible" press has served as a nexus around which to consider the social roles of the press.

Five roles in particular have received especial attention (Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm, 1956, pp. 73-103). The press should offer: a truthful and comprehensive account of the day's events; a forum for the exchange of ideas; a representative picture of society's constituent groups; the presentation and clarification of social goals and values; and full access to the day's intelligence.

For some writers, these roles clearly call upon the press to use its power in support of the powerless. Christians (1986, p. 110) finds in social reponsibility the imperative that "reporting must be an instrument of social justice." He writes, "Although the times have grown more painful, I assert the strongest possible mission for the news profession: Does it promote justice? Does it aid in fulfilling the stirring vision in which justice flows down like a mighty stream? In a day when the powerless have few alternatives left, and virtually no recourse, should the press not serve as a voice, as a megaphone of sorts for those who cry out to be heard?" (p. 111).

Galtung and Vincent (1992) too call for news values that promote social justice. They argue, "we need a new global and human journalism, liberated from visible and invisible repression, capable of reflecting in its social communication the dialectic between the global nature of our problems and our perception of them" (p. 24).

Shriver (1992, pp. 128) too calls for socially reponsible journalistic creeds that "adhere to standards of humanistic universalism." He writes: "Every human being has worth, and the great human obligation is to acknowledge that worth through an empathy that permits us to see our neighbors as people, like ourselves. Translated back into a plausible norm for journalism:

Every human being is newsworthy." Acknowledging that some might see his suggestion as "moralistic and useless," Shriver nonetheless argues that journalists have a democratic duty to name the anonymous and make the poor visible, "even the ones who make so little public noise that their silence is itself a badge of their need" (p. 130).

Summarizing "an eclectic system of journalism ethics," Lambeth (1986, p. 38) writes, "To describe the ethical journalist as a humane truth teller who seeks justice and protects freedom as a faithful steward of his craft may well invite credulity." But the reason, Lambeth affirms, "lies not in the principles themselves but in the fact of our humanity."

A careful reading of the literature on news and the oppressed shows at least three standards by which reporting might be judged. Most basic, of course, is that the news media must break free from conventional news values in order to seek out, publish and broadcast stories of the powerless. Traber (1993, p. 155) refers to the "invisible people" of the news and argues that the problem "does not lie so much with the ethnocentric and middle-class attitudes of the news managers as with contemporary news culture. The mass media are characterized by a set of conventional 'rules' which are applied to the selection and treatment of news in a fairly uniform way." Thus, he concludes (p. 156), "One of the biggest challenges of the new international information order is to develop new and different criteria for newsworthiness."[4]

A second standard for coverage of the oppressed: The press must name and give voice to individuals and allow them to express their own experiences in their own words. When reporting is interested in people as people, it names them and lets them speak. When reporting is interested in dramatic events, the events take prominence, drama and conflict are highlighted and the people remain speechless and unnamed. Shriver (1992) calls upon the media to disturb the huge generalizations and stereotyped images that people hold of the oppressed. He writes, "One responsibility of the media in a democracy is to disturb the placidity of public images of those who are silent and anonymous" (p. 132). He notes the power derived from the common reporting device of focusing on one individual selected from the crush of statistics and death rates. And he affirms (p. 131), "Journalists who tell us stories of individual sufferers as representatives of massive suffering undertake an awesome intellectual, artistic and moral task."

A third standard: The press should move beyond surface descriptions of events and explore the fundamental structures that shackle the powerless. Christians (1986) notes how easily the press moves to the dramatic event, the eruption of a problem, without ever probing the roots of the problem. He says (p. 112), "Cameras capture the stony gaze of a lonely old woman, abandoned in a nursing home rocking chair, and the audience is touched. But the substructure -- the institutional evil that allows this abuse of the aged -- remains virtually untouched." Galtung and Vincent

(1992, p. 24) also critique reporting of fundamental social problems. They state:

> A vast array of detached space/time events or 'atoms' presented as news constitute a set of events, not a set of problems. A problem has a beginning in its roots and a possible end in its solution. . . . On the complex way from problem to solution, alternatives have to blossom and the carriers of those alternatives, strategic actors, must be mobilized or at least identified and noticed. But this is not the way reporting is done.

These three standards -- breaking from convention to report on the powerless; naming and giving voice to the anonymous, and moving beyond surface events to explore fundamental problems -- can form an evaluative basis for a humane journalism. With a conception of news and the oppressed now established, the following sections first summarize the trials of Brazil's street children and then examine reporting on them in four U.S. news media.

THE BRAZILIAN STREET CHILDREN

The hardships of the Brazilian street children have their roots in the tremendous upheavals the nation endured during the 20th Century. The catalogue of changes is overwhelming. The country changed from predominantly rural to urban in a few, short decades (The World Resources Institute, 1992, pp. 41, 45-46). Corrupt dictators and rulers looted the nation while incurring a foreign debt of $120 billion. These rulers, along with the upper class, institutionalized one of the world's largest income disparities between rich and poor -- the world's third-largest exporter of food and ninth largest economy sees 10 percent of the population enjoy 50 percent of the wealth while 65 percent of the population lives in real poverty (Dreze and Sen, 1989, pp. 187-89; Wirpsa, 1993; The World Resources Institute, 1992, pp. 79-81). Inflation, which ravages the poor, in some years has been over 1,500 percent (Human Development Report, 1993). Racism divides the population; Afro-Brazilians, who make up a sizable percentage of the street children, face especial abuse.

The effect of these changes on Brazilian children has been incalculable. But the numbers have been staggering. A UNESCO report estimated that seven million children have been completely abandoned, while 35 million of the 60 million who are under 18 years olds live in poverty (de Oliveira, 1993, December). Brazilian law added to the misery. A UNICEF (1993, p. 38) study stated:

> Under two decades of dictatorship, the law itself had become an instrument for the oppression of children in Brazil. Thousands were sent off to harsh correctional institutions simply because they were poor and abandoned. Such children had no legal rights, and abuse by police and other authorities had become the norm.

Though democratic elections were held in 1985, Brazil's children still faced a political, judicial and social system hardened against them. Brazilian Roman Catholic Bishop Mauro Morelli has noted the political system "blames the poor themselves for their poverty [and] practices the extermination of street children and other marginalized groups and undesirables as a solution of protecting its wealth and the purity of its caste" (Wirpsa, 1993, p. 12).

The forces arrayed against children had become so threatening that national and international groups banded together in 1987 and succeeded in having children's rights explicitly cited in Brazil's new constitution. And months after, laws were passed protecting children from local courts that sought to imprison or institutionalize them.

Ironically these constitutional and judicial reforms may have helped bring about the surge in child killings. With millions of children still on the streets of cities and towns and with courts forbidden to remove them through imprisonment, some groups sought to exterminate the children. Two groups in particular have been traced to the killings. Drug lords have killed children whose petty thievery might hamper their operations. And the military police have taken justice into their own hands with the backing of businesses and the wealthy.

By 1989, when this study begins, the murder of street children was rampant. On average, four youths were killed each day on Brazilian streets between 1988 and 1990, according to the U.S. human rights group Americas Watch (Wirpsa, 1993, p. 11). Different from the random violence that afflicts U.S. youths caught in crossfires of gangs, drug organizations and state authorities, the killings in Brazil represent a conscious, concerted extermination of homeless children by death squads of the rich and powerful. How did the U.S. news media cover such a story? The next section reports coverage of the street children prior to the July 1993 killings.

'DEAD END KIDS': JANUARY 1989 TO JULY 1993

With a few exceptions that will be closely examined, U.S. news coverage of the killing of Brazilian street children for the four-and-a-half year period prior to the July 1993 murders was sparse and shallow in the four news outlets examined. Five stories total were produced, three by the New York Times. Although the killings were occurring daily during the period studied, the deaths mostly went unreported, even when the media had reporters and staff on the streets of Rio de Janeiro for other business.

For example, ABC had no stories on the killing of Brazilian children prior to July 1993. Yet the network twice had producers, crews and reporters, including lead White House correspondent Brit Hume, on the streets of Rio de Janeiro for presidential missions. President George Bush began a Latin American tour in Brazil in December 1990. Two years later, Bush attended the environmental Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. On neither trip did ABC coverage stray from the presidential missions to report on the street children.

ABC did report on Brazilian children in one story prior to the 1993 murders. In a piece on the September 1990 World Summit for Children, held in New York, Beth Nissen offered an overview of preventable diseases that take the lives of 40,000 children daily. Nissen cited Brazilian President Fernando Collor de Mallo as a leader who "has declared war on childhood disease [and] has used his office to rally the national media and the Brazilian population." Ironically, during Collor's two-and-a-half year term, which ended with his resignation amid scandal at the end of 1992, the brutal oppression of Brazil's street children dramatically increased.

The New York Times provided three stories on the Brazilian murders -- the most of any news outlet examined. The paper's bureau in Rio de Janeiro and the Times' traditional commitment to international news coverage indicated that its coverage would be superior to others. Yet a close reading of the stories shows them to be derived from external sources: Amnesty International and the Vatican.

Though the paper ran a number of articles on crime and poverty in Rio in 1989 and 1990, the killing of street children went unmentioned. A Reuters wire service report in September 1990 broke the story of Brazilian child killings in the Times. Based upon an Amnesty International study, datelined from London, the 10-paragraph article said that 457 young people, "most with no criminal record," were killed by death squads in Brazil during the past year and "that at least one child a day is killed by death squads" ("Killing of Brazil Youths Reported," 1990, September 6). The story was given 370 words on page A8.

Less than eight weeks later, James Brooke (1990, November 13), the Times bureau chief in Rio, used the same Amnesty International study for his own report on the killings. "Rio Slum Children Find

Death in 'City of God'" was placed deep in the newspaper, page A17, but Brooke's reporting built on the Amnesty study and found that the death count was taken only from a survey of crimes published in Brazil newspapers. "Undoubtedly, there were a lot more," a sociologist declared.

It took another year for the Times to return to the story of the killings. This time, instead of an Amnesty International study, the motivation for Times coverage was a speech by Pope John Paul II who visited Brazil in 1991 and protested the murder of children. The story by staff writer Alan Cowell (1991, October 21) began:

> Salvador, Brazil, Oct. 20: In an impassioned address as he neared the end of a 10-day tour of Brazil, Pope John Paul II inveighed today against the abandonment and killing of children born to lives of poverty and hazard in the slums that coil about this city.

Three paragraphs later, the Pope was quoted, "There cannot and should be not children assassinated and eliminated on the pretext of preventing crime, marked for death." Despite such passion, the Times would not focus on the killings again for almost two years, until the murders of July 1993.

Time provided the barest coverage of the Brazilian street children prior to the July 1993 murders. The magazine ran one story, a one-paragraph article by Sidney Urquhart (1993, March 23) in the "Grapevine" section. It offered an almost flip, jovial account of the child killings:

> The road to Rio de Janeiro will soon be jammed with thousands of delegates attending the U.N.'s June Earth Summit. As green-minded summiteers ponder such now-or-never topics as global warming, the rain-forest crunch and the world's vanishing flora and fauna, the most endangered species of all may be Rio's street children. A Brazilian child-advocacy group reports that 470 juveniles were murdered in the Rio area last year, many of them by death squads made up of off-duty police hired by local shopkeepers. If the authorities can help it, Rio's most endangered species will not be on display at all during the summit. While busily filling potholes and beautifying parks, city officials are also beefing up efforts to keep roving bands of street children away from the pockets of delegates.

Time's language -- "road to Rio," "green-minded summiteers," "now-or-never topics," and the twice repeated "most endangered species" -- betrays the deadly seriousness of the topic. And the children received no mention in Time's later, extensive summit coverage from the streets of Rio de Janeiro.

Newsweek too provided one story on the child murders in the four-and-a-half-year time period studied. The story however was the opposite of Time's jaunty paragraph. Newsweek published a comprehensive package: a major story and sidebar covering six pages, almost 2,000 words, with 5 photographs. Entitled "Dead End Kids," the story, which ran on May 25, 1992, pegged to the following month's Earth Summit in Rio, was the most in-depth look at the killings offered by any of the four media. Written by Brook Larmer (1992, May 25), the article began with the murder of Wellington Barbosa, a 14-year-old boy, shot down in the street. It described the pain of his half-sister who had witnessed the killing and allowed her to give voice to her outrage.

Though the article failed to explore the enormous income disparity between rich and poor to which many attribute the misery of Brazil, the story did probe for other reasons to explain the child killings. It proffered "a Dickensian scene of poverty and lawlessness." It touched on the population shift from rural to urban. It mentioned the burden of foreign debt, the staggering inflation, the popularity of the vigilante squads among much of the middle and upper class. The sidebar featured a public prosecutor who stalks "dozens of alleged killers of Brazilian kids."

Returning to Barbosa, the article ended by addressing the question of why he died. "Perhaps the best answer is that Wellington Barbosa was a victim not only of his killer but of the cumulative afflictions of a society riven by lawlessness and inequality." Why did this child die? The question and possible answers were voiced just once by the four news media in four and a half years but, as will be discussed further on, this article demonstrated the power, promise -- and good reporting -- possible within a journalism of social justice.

'DEAD END KIDS' II: JULY TO DECEMBER 1993

Before July 23, 1993, the murder of Brazilian street children had been carried out mostly in a covert manner. If groups of youngsters were targetted, they were bundled into cars and taken to a desolate place to be tortured and shot. Sometimes assassinations would be done in plain view on the streets but usually these were of isolated individuals. July 23 was different. A group of youths, rather than being "disappeared" into the night, were shot and killed -- as they slept -- on the streets of Rio de Janeiro.

For reasons to be considered below, these killings proved more newsworthy for the U.S. media sampled here than the thousands of previous murders. The numbers are not high, noteworthy only in relation to past omissions: ABC ran two stories; the New York Times five; Time ran an in-depth piece; Newsweek, however, ran none. But after years of neglect, the killing of Brazilian street children became a bonafide news event, reported the next day and pursued for weeks. Yet though the killings continued -- even increased -- in the months after the July slaughter, media coverage eventually waned and then disappeared.

As stated, ABC's "World News Tonight with Peter Jennings" covered the July 1993 murders with two stories, although it delayed more than two weeks. On August 11, Beth Nissen offered a minute-and-a-half report. Opening with pictures of the Candelaria Church and Brazilian documentary footage of the street children, Nissen reported the murders and spoke briefly with a child advocate, a sociologist and "Fernando," a 13-year-old homeless boy, who all affirmed the dangers that face Brazil's children.

On August 17, the network broadcast a more in-depth follow-up. Anchor Sam Donaldson provided the theme: "When we come back, the street children of Brazil -- Is the world learning to hate the poor?" Beth Nissen's report lasted almost three minutes. Beginning again with footage of the church and children congregated on the streets, Nissen spoke with the child advocate and sociologist from her previous report; they and other sources now described the intense poverty that has led to much homelessness. Nissen also gave more time to Fernando, the 13-year-old boy, who was now filmed at a local shelter. Through an interpreter, Fernando said, "I want to make something of myself and then go back to my mother and show her I amounted to something." The close-up of Fernando was startling; his hard, lined face and his grave manner made him look years older than 13. After these two reports, ABC provided no further reporting in 1993 on the Brazilian children.

The New York Times provided relatively extensive coverage of the nighttime massacre with five stories and an unaccompanied photograph in the months following. James Brooke's (1993, July 24), article, "Gunmen said to Be Police Kill 7 Street Children in Rio," was more than 1,000 words on page A3 and was complemented by a poignant photograph of children mourning. Brooke's lead highlighted the drama of the killings and emphasized the contrast of rich and poor, powerful and powerless:

> Hooded members of an "extermination group" killed seven homeless boys and wounded two others as they slept before dawn today in the shadows of the city's symbols of luxury and power.
>
> Men cruising Rio's banking district in a taxi and in a

> private car, who survivors later said were police officers, stopped in front of Candelaria Church and sprayed a group of 45 sleeping boys and girls with pistol fire. Four boys died instantly. A fifth was shot and killed as he ran from the front of the church, a gold-encrusted landmark that is a regular setting for lavish society weddings.
>
> Driving through deserted streets, the men shot to death two more boys who were sleeping in gardens at the Museum of Modern Art, on Rio's showcase Seaside Avenue.

Three days later, Brooke reported the arrests of three military policemen for the murders and suggested that "Rio's military police are responsible for half the recorded assaults on street children here" (Brooke, 1993, July 27, p. A5). Two days after, Brooke filed a surprisingly upbeat story, "For Brazil's Street Children, a Happy Path to Take." The story focused on an "innovative program" of arts and cultural activities that is "winning international attention as a model for recovering Brazil's youths lost to the streets" (Brooke, 1993, July 29, p. A4).

This story seemed designed to provide a kind of closure to the Brazil child killing story. A month later, in a "Week in Review" essay, Brooke sought to explain the July killings and other crimes in Brazil not in terms of economics but in terms of a culture of impunity now under review. "Many Brazilians are wondering whether such brazen episodes are symptoms of a flawed social fabric peculiar to this vast land," Brooke wrote. He quoted a Brazilian anthropologist: "Impunity in Brazil is part of a culture that doesn't have a tradition of allocating responsibility" (Brooke, 1993, August 29, sec. 4, p. 6).

But the child killings would not be closed off. On the same day as Brooke's "Week in Review" essay, the Times printed an Associated Press story that in a three-day period eight more children had been murdered in the streets ("Eight more children reported killed in Brazil," 1993, August 29).

Almost four months went by before the Times returned to the child killings. In December, a Reuters photograph was printed on page A7. It depicted a man carrying a street child during a protest near the site of the July killings. The cutline said, "Businessmen, union leaders, show business figures and workers joined hands in silence for two minutes to call for peace" ("Two Minutes of Silence," 1993, December 18). The photograph ran alone, unaccompanied by a story.[5]

Time reported the July 23 killings with a story on August 9. The 1,000-word story, accompanied by four photographs, appropriated the Newsweek headline from the year before. "Rio's Dead End Kids," by Marguerite Michaels (1993, August 9), began with the story of Cristiano, a 16-year-old boy who had been on the streets since he was 6. The magazine detailed the murders and reported that the killings had been going on for years, that four children a day were dying from such assaults, and that police were responsible for at least half the killings. One long paragraph attempted to trace the many, complex problems at the heart of the killings:

In 40 years Brazil has gone from a predominantly rural country to an overwhelmingly urban one. Almost every major city is surrounded by slums mired in poverty, despair and violence. Out of a population of 152 million, there are 32 million children living in families earning less than $30 per person a month, a particularly bitter statistic in the richest economy in Latin America. The top 20% of Brazil's population earns 26 times as much as the bottom 20%; in the U.S. the disparity is 9 to 1. "It is no use killing street kids," says 17-year-old Rosimere at the Sao Martinho shelter. "There will always be more of them."

Oddly, Newsweek, which provided the most-in-depth report on the Brazilian street children prior to the July 1993 killings, did not cover the 1993 murders. Perhaps the magazine felt it had already done the Brazilian children story the year before. Or perhaps its news values had undergone such a change that the story of the child killings no longer was news. The following section explores the news media coverage of the street children in the context of traditional U.S. news values.

TRADITIONAL NEWS VALUES & THE BRAZILIAN STREET CHILDREN

U.S. news media cannot, of course, cover the world. Global events must be omitted and selected, then edited and shaped, according to principles and practices of vaguely defined and loosely applied news values. A long and familiar literature has detailed the structure of foreign news and international news values (Adams, 1982; Ahern, 1984; Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Gerbner and Marvanyi, 1977; Hester, 1973; Lent, 1977; Ostgaard, 1965; Shoemaker, Chang and Brendlinger, 1986; Stevenson and Shaw, 1984). Coverage of international events, this literature has shown, is heavily influenced by structural factors, such as reliance upon national foreign policy, the relative importance of events to the home country and the distribution of news gathering bureaus and resources. Traditional news values too influence news coverage, such as local angles, prominence, magnitude, disorder and human interest.

For years the traditional news values apparently rendered unnewsworthy the murder of thousands of Brazilian street children. Prior to the July 1993 killings, the murders received little or no attention from the four news media examined. This neglect can be interpreted in terms of those news values.

One integral -- and absent -- news value for U.S. coverage of the Brazilian street children was foreign policy connections. The one constant in the news value literature: Foreign news coverage is driven by foreign policy, even as the news media search for alternate frameworks. Brazil's tentative steps toward democracy and its rich economy have made it a unlikely target for U.S. interference in its internal human rights. Simply, U.S. officials were silent on the slaughter and their silence mostly was echoed by U.S. media. The Bush and Clinton administrations did not make the street children an item on the foreign agenda, and indeed, as we have seen, George Bush twice visited Brazil and offered no stance on the killings in the streets. The media followed suit.

The killings of Brazilian street children also lacked another traditional news value: a U.S. "local" angle. For example, no U.S. religious or relief workers were kidnapped or killed by the Brazilian death squads. In El Salvador and Nicaragua, to cite two examples, the killings of U.S. citizens heightened U.S. news media's interest in those countries.

Another absent news values, applicable mostly to television and perhaps the news magazines: Prior to 1993, the killing of street children lacked good pictures for visual impact. The discrete murder of children kidnapped at night from deserted city streets took place far from the lights of news cameras. Stories without pictures have less value to many U.S. news media.

Another absent news value relates to the ongoing aspect of the killings. Prior to the 1993 murders, there was no one event on which the media could focus. Oddly, the continuing nature of the murders may have worked against their newsworthiness. News media give prominence to dramatic and unusual events that stand out from the norm. If 6,000 Brazilian children had been killed in an earthquake or flood, U.S. news would have given the story intense coverage. The murder of children day after day -- especially if the killings had been covered one time -- fails this news value. The media "had already done" Brazilian street children.

Yet, for a short time, U.S. news media did give coverage to the murder of the children. The July 1993 killings brought about a deepened, although short-lived, focus by U.S. media. Reporters spoke with the street children. Attempts were made to understand the problem. What had changed? This coverage too may be explained through traditional news values.

The particulars of the July 1993 killings were dramatic and unusual enough to increase their newsworthiness. Rather than the isolated, unwitnessed murder of individual children, eight children were gunned down in the middle of town, in the middle of night. The murders were a sharply defined event that the media could report. Additional, subtle factors seemed to aid the newsworthiness. The murder scene evoked power and beauty -- the shadows of the huge church, the gardens of a world-class museum -- which provided a dramatic contrast for the depiction of murder of homeless children.

Another news value aiding coverage of the July 1993 killings may have been the legitimacy provided by the previous work and influence of powerful outside groups -- Amnesty International and the Vatican. These groups already had succeeded in placing the story of Brazilian street children in three New York Times stories prior to the killings. The dramatic street murders allowed other journalists -- who might have already been interested in the situation -- to take up their own reporting.

In a related sense, the influence of the New York Times might also be considered. The Times is one of the few U.S. news media that can set news values for other media. In the week following the July killings, the paper printed three stories -- which may have influenced decisions by Time and ABC to do their own stories in later weeks.

All of these factors were not enough, however, to keep the Brazilian street children in the news. Within a month of the killings, the U.S. news media again had turned away, even as the murder of children increased in Brazil. Having interpreted the five years of coverage in terms of traditional news values, the paper now evaluates the coverage in terms of a humane and just journalism.

NEWS VALUES AND THE OPPRESSED

Although the neglect of the Brazilian street children by U.S. news media can be explained by traditional news values, surely it cannot be defended. The murder of thousands of homeless children cannot be considered unworthy of attention. In terms of a humane journalism, then, U.S. news coverage of the Brazilian street children by the four media examined here must be seen at best as a wasted opportunity, at worst as a debauched indifference.

For years, the killing of homeless Brazilian children remained unnewsworthy. The most basic standard culled from the literature -- overcoming convention to provide coverage of suffering -- was rarely met. Christians (1986, p. 110) put the question directly: "I hold the news media's feet to the fires of injustice and suffering. In our days of persistent inequalities, do the most vulnerable receive priority or not?" Certainly in media coverage of the street children, the answer is no, especially when one considers the years prior to the July 1993 killings; five stories in four and a half years, when thousands of children were being exterminated, shows more contempt than concern.

The second basic standard of a humane journalism is to name the anonymous and give voice to those denied. This standard too was not met; three times in five years the media provided names for children of Brazil. Though the number is hopelessly small, the stories can exemplify what Shriver (1992, p. 131) called the "awesome intellectual, artistic and moral task" of letting individuals represent events of massive suffering. Millions of people saw on ABC the hard life in Fernando's 13-year-old face or read of Cristiano's bravura in Time. In particular, Newsweek's one story on the street children before the 1993 slaughter showed the power and possibility of a humane journalism. Beginning and ending with the sad, short, compelling story of Wellington Barbosa, shot down in the streets at the age of 14, the Newsweek story captured for a brief moment one of the 6,000 individual lives taken from the streets of Brazil.

The third standard for a humane journalism -- pursuing the roots of oppression -- was not fully met by any of the media. When traditional news values finally led the media to the streets of Rio de Janeiro to cover the July 1993 killings, the media squeezed the drama from the event -- the nighttime murder of children in the shadows of beauty and power -- but failed to offer real insights into the deep, fundamental inequities at the heart of the event. The inequities themselves need to be newsworthy and deserve to be revealed in their own stories -- not offered as a one-paragraph gloss to "why." "A press nurtured by communitarian ethics requires more of itself than fair treatment of events deemed worthy of coverage," write Christians, Ferre and Fackler (1993, p. 93). "Under the notion that justice itself -- and not merely haphazard public enlightenment -- is a telos of the press, the news-media system stands under obligation to tell the stories that justice requires."

The lack of interest in fundamental problems was displayed in perhaps the media's worst moments -- in the months after the July killings. Though their attention had finally been drawn to the street children, though they had finally focused on their suffering, as soon as the blood of the children had been used of its news value, the U.S. news media turned away. Within weeks, the reporters were gone. The killings never stopped but the media coverage did.

Despite this indictment, no simple lessons can be taken from considering coverage of the Brazilian street children in terms of a humane journalism. Surely the killings should have been covered more -- and more in depth. But the issues are complex, and the stakes significant. What story would not be published or broadcast so that the Brazilian street children would be given a voice? The choices -- within a framework of traditional or humane news values -- will always need to be made. But those choices should no longer take place within a canon that turns its eyes from the suffering of the powerless and its ears from the lament of the oppressed. The news media cannot possibly cover all of the seemingly unending atrocities offered by the world. For every exemplary, humane report filed from Somalia or Bosnia, there will be silences from Sudan and Armenia and Brazil. But the media can try -- and be redeemed in the attempt. Of the many possible frameworks currently being debated for international news values, only a humane and just journalism has the capacity to affirm the newsworthiness of the oppressed, to affirm that the killings of thousands of homeless children is worthy of our attention, of our words, of our time.

NOTES

1. Hallin (1987, p. 23) sees "an extended period of public confusion and uncertainty about world politics, and a passive, sometimes grudging consent to the decison of the foreign policy establishment, so long as the costs of those decisions are not extremely high." He also raises the possibility that a "specter of world anarchy" might replace the specter of Communism, giving rise to the media image of "Fortress America" -- "an island of civilization in a sea of political barbarism" (p. 21).

2. James F. Hoge (1993, p. 7), editor of Foreign Affairs, states, "There is no more important subject for journalists to master in the post-cold War world than the recounting of economic happenings and options and consequences." Bernard Gwertzman (1993, pp. 38-39), foreign editor of the New York Times, told his staff:

> We have been quietly and not so quietly urging more and more stories on economic affairs for the foreign report. Every correspondent must make a very major effort to become literate in economic affairs, to be able to write about macroeconomic trends such as monetary policies, as well as on micro stories such as new businesses in former communist states. It is now just as important for a foreign correspondent to understand economics as it has been to study exotic foreign languages.

3. Vanden Heuvel (1993, p. 19) notes, "With the end of the Cold War, humanitarianism has taken on new dimensions as a component of American foreign policy, and the media are largely responsible."

4. Traber (1993, p. 156) also notes that "the New World Information and Communication Order is now a symbol in many parts of the South which inspires the 'invisible people' to seize their own communication power and speak for themselves."

5. Although the story fell outside the five-year time period set for this study, the _Times_ did report that, six months after the international outcry over the July 1993 killings, the murder of street children in Brazil had increased even more (Brooke, 1994, January 3).

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THE INFLUENCE OF TABLOID-STYLE TV NEWS ON VIEWER RECALL, INTEREST AND PERCEPTION OF IMPORTANCE

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THE INFLUENCE OF TABLOID-STYLE TV NEWS ON VIEWER RECALL, INTEREST AND PERCEPTION OF IMPORTANCE

To many television news professionals, one of the most disturbing trends in TV journalism is the increasing number of stations that are "going tabloid." In most major cities at least one TV news operation is highlighting sex and violence in search of big ratings.[1] The heavy dose of sensationalistic content is punctuated by presentation techniques that include quick-cut editing, "flashy" graphics, dramatic music, the use of colloquial (even slang) language, and rapid-fire narration, all of which – the critics charge – emphasize style over substance.[2]

Local stations first began toying with the tabloid format in the early 1990s following the ratings successes of such programs as "Inside Edition" and "A Current Affair."[3] In some markets the local stations were responding to direct competition from the tabloid shows.[4] Conventional journalists have charged that tabloid news is dangerous because it blurs the lines between fact and fiction,[5] reaches to a "down market,"[6] and promotes a "sleazoid info-tainment culture."[7]

The person said to be the architect of local tabloid is Joel Cheatwood, formerly news director of WSVN-TV, Miami and now vice-president for news of the station's parent company. Cheatwood argues that he produces shows for a young, sophisticated, TV-savvy audience that wants its information delivered in an exciting way: "We are going to make ourselves as aesthetically pleasing as we can ... so if somebody looks at my newscast in Miami and says ... they look like 'Entertainment Tonight,' they have graphics like 'Entertainment Tonight,' well great. If that's going to draw them in and make them watch our news and become better informed, then I say more power to us."[8]

Prior research has focused primarily on the print media and indicates that tabloid news is used primarily for entertainment[9] and not held to be highly credible[10]. To date, no research has investigated how tabloid-style production techniques affect audience perceptions of TV news. Do tabloid elements help the viewer become better informed? Could such techniques have the opposite effect and distract from the story content? Or might tabloid features have no influence? This is the first study designed to answer those questions.

BACKGROUND

The search for understanding of how well the public learns from news presentations has notable antecedents. Seventy years ago in *Public Opinion*, journalist and political philosopher Walter Lippman observed that while citizens must make choices in response to events, they lack firsthand access to reality. Thus, they rely on the *social construction of reality* as presented by the media. Yet the media cannot tell us everything, nor reflect reality exactly. Many problems arise, said Lippman, because of the discrepancy between "the world outside and the pictures in our heads."[11]

Since the late 1960s when television emerged as the preeminent source of news for most Americans, researchers have attempted to learn what presentation methods enhance recall and retention. A number of experiments have investigated the impact of visual content.[12] Other experiments tested such factors as the use of headline-type recaps,[13] videotex vs. live newscaster,[14] and pacing.[15] While the findings of these experimental studies often conflict, field investigations leave no doubt that viewers in their normal surroundings remember very little about the stories they see.[16] Survey results of this type indicate a need for researchers to study, test and develop production methods that will make news stories interesting to watch and, at the same time, enable viewers to remember and learn as much as possible.

The present experiment is the third in a series investigating the impact of various encoding techniques used in the production of local television news.[17] The *encoding* process refers to such presentation elements as use of videotape, graphics, soundbites, camera angles, writing style, etc. The purpose of this line of research is to learn how variations in encoding might influence the way viewers *decode* the news presentation, i.e., interpret the meanings of what they have seen and heard.

Past studies have used stimulus materials comparing fairly simplistic encoding elements such as "talking heads," "stills," "film," or "audio-only."[18] The experiments in the present series are designed to overcome limitations of this type by comparing a much wider range of encoding factors commonly used by television stations today. The accumulated findings will enable researchers to develop a body of knowledge concerning the effectiveness of certain encoding choices, and lead to the development of an encoding theory for local television news.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the influence of tabloid-style production on three dependent variables: (1) level of recall of major facts in the story, (2) level of perceived importance of the story, and (3) level of interest in the story. Each of the dependent variables was assessed in an experimental design in which three groups of subjects viewed a newscast containing a stimulus story. The stimulus story was produced in three distinct formats: traditional, partial tabloid (hybrid) and full tabloid. The three treatments constituted the independent conditions of the experiment.

METHOD

Four features of the methodology used require explanation. These are the selection and mode of preparation of the stimulus material; the selection and assignment of subjects to conditions of the experiment; the controls over conditions of exposure; procedures used in the measurement of the dependent variables; and the statistical tests used to analyze the results.

Three "routine" news stories that had been broadcast on a medium-sized market television station were selected for inclusion in the experimental newscasts. The stories were chosen from three subject categories that received mid-range scores in a poll of news interest among TV viewers.[19] These categories were the economy, the courts, and local government. Categories that scored high interest levels – such as crime – were not used in the experiment to avoid disproportionate influence on the dependent variables. This allowed assessment of the influence of production elements independent of content.

The specific story chosen from each category reflected the type of item that constitutes a large part of local newscasts. A story about the city budget was used for the stimulus treatment. Stories concerning the recession and a court ruling on police searches were selected for the two non-treated items. To eliminate the possible influence of subjects' prior knowledge, major facts were altered and time references were "updated" so the stories would appear to be recent ones. To insure that the stories fit the general style, time requirements and other "encoding" features of a typical local news program, they were produced by TV news professionals following standard industry practices.

The stories were contained in three, six-minute newscasts — also produced by professionals — employing a common "newsbrief" format used by local stations (see Appendix A). The newscasts were identical with the exception of the stimulus story which, as noted above, was done in three versions: traditional, partial tabloid (hybrid) and full tabloid. The hybrid version used the exact same video and graphics as the traditional, but was rewritten in more informal, colloquial language and was narrated at a faster, "livelier" pace. The full tabloid version added specialized video and graphics effects as well as music. While the production style of the stimulus story was different for each newscast, the facts were identical and presented in the same order so that comparisons could be made in a uniform way on the dependent variables.

Eighty-six adults, selected at random from the local community, were involved in the experiment conducted over a four day period in Spring, 1994. A screening procedure determined that all participants were viewers of local television news and were above the age of eighteen. Each subject was paid $30 as an incentive for his/her participation.

The subjects were placed by a random procedure into one of three groups. Each group was told that the study involved opinions about television news. The groups viewed their assigned newscast in a quiet room under similar conditions and immediately afterward completed a questionnaire, which yielded usable data from a total of eighty subjects.

One portion of the questionnaire consisted of a multiple choice test on three primary factual items for each story in the newscast. Subjects received a score of 1 for each correct answer so that scores ranged from 0-3. The mean recall score was calculated for each subject by dividing the total number answered correctly by three. The importance the subjects attached to the stories and interest were measured by a simple five-position rating scale. These ranged from a total lack of interest or importance (level 1) through a neutral point (level 3) to high interest or importance (level 5).

Questions designed to elicit demographic information were also included for comparative purposes. The groups were balanced in gender, age and education: 36% were male, 44% female; 54% were under age 35, 46% over 35; 52% had college degrees, 48% did not. Eighty percent of the participants had lived in the community for five years or more.

The principal rationale for using the experimental approach with subjects from the news-viewing population is clear. As our review of literature unmistakably indicates, the general public does not learn much from news broadcasts when left on its own to view at home. Little meaningful data on the present research problems could have been gathered by studying a sample of home viewers. While the experimental strategy reveals only what viewers gain from news broadcasts under controlled conditions, it provides a baseline of findings for later comparison with other groups and research strategies. Once the generalizations emerging from experimental studies are well-understood, comparisons with the general public viewing under uncontrolled conditions can be attempted.

A oneway analysis of variance was applied to test for differences between the three versions of the stimulus story among the three dependent variables (recall, importance, interest). In addition, a 3x3 multivariate analysis of variance with repeated measures examined differences between recall, importance and interest within each story and across all three stories. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the relationship between recall, interest and importance for each of the three stories.

FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the mean level of recall, interest, and importance for the stimulus story (City Budget). While the hybrid version (partial tabloid) showed somewhat higher scores for each dependent condition, the differences were not significant. This indicates that recall, perceived importance and interest in the story were not influenced by the either the partial or full tabloid treatment.

Table 1 About Here

As Table 2 shows, differences were found when measuring the dependent variables across the three stories. Recall was significantly higher for the Recession story ($\underline{M} = 2.10$), while perception of importance was highest for the City Budget story ($\underline{M} = 4.3$).

Table 2 About Here

Correlations were found between interest and importance for all three stories. Pearson's correlation coefficients were .63 ($p < .001$) for the Recession story, .78 ($p < .001$) for the Court Ruling story, and .43 ($p < .001$) for the City Budget story.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

It is quite clear, within the limits of the present data, that production techniques commonly employed in tabloid-style formats do not significantly influence the level of recall of story facts; nor do they have an effect on viewer interest or perception of importance. These findings are at odds with the conventional wisdom of many news professionals that certain production techniques can attract the attention and interest of viewers, helping them become better informed citizens.

The fact that "flashy" production had no significant influence on the dependent variables was not surprising to the experimenters. The first study in the present series showed that neither recall nor interest was affected significantly by "elaborate" versus "simple" story formats.[20]

An important question concerns the correlation between the dependent variables. If a story holds a high or low level interest for viewers does that mean it will be perceived as more or less important, or that its factual content will be remembered better or worse? The answer from the present data clearly indicates that interest level does correlate to perception of importance, but has no significant relationship to recall. In other words, a news item may be interesting to a viewer and therefor perceived as important, yet this fact does not extend to his/her ability to remember basic information about the story.

One explanation may be that the precise nature or "content" of the story is the determinant of recall. As noted earlier, all three stories used in the experiment were "routine" items chosen from news categories of moderate interest level. This was done specifically to control for content in order to isolate and test production techniques. A future experiment using tabloid-style production techniques on stories from high or low interest categories should be attempted.

Another variable concerning recall, which was not specifically tested here, concerns placement of the story within the newscast. The Recession story appeared in first position and was remembered best, while the City Budget item was in last position and had the lowest level of recall. This means – in terms of Hovland's classic experiments – primacy had a significant influence on recall.[21] A previous experiment in this series also found that stories in first position were recalled best.[22]

This experiment, along with the two previous others in the same series, has two related functions. The first is to add to a foundation of base-line knowledge about encoding choices used by professional journalists in producing their news stories. Do they work the way that journalists have come to believe? If not, how do they work? What are the factors that can be manipulated as production variables that will result in viewers recalling content beyond a level now typical of home-viewing audiences? At the same time, what production techniques, factors or variables can result in viewers perceiving a story as interesting and as important?

No claim can be made that the results of this experiment provide generalizations that have immediate application to stations who use, or are considering a move to tabloid techniques. That question will have to be decided after additional experiment studies have been completed, and a systematic encoding theory of television news is developed and tested among home viewers. This, of course, is a long-range objective along a methodologically difficult road. However, the alternative is to continue to accept the unsupported generalizations of many TV news professionals who argue that style is as important as substance.

NOTES

[1] Howard Kurtz, "Murder! Mayhem! Ratings! Tabloid Sensationalism is Thriving on TV News," *The Washington Post*, July 4, 1993, p. A1.

[2] See: "Bad News," *American Journalism Review*, Sep., 1993, pp.18-27.

[3] Nielsen Media Research, *Nielsen U.S. TV Household Estimates*, 1993.

[4] D. Lamb, Into the Realm of Tabloids," Los Angeles Times,

[5] Elizabeth S. Bird, "Storytelling on the Far Side: Journalism and the Weekly Tabloid," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*,7(4), 1990, pp. 377-89.

[6] Bill Moyers, "Slouching Toward Gettysburg." Speech to the Center for Communication. Reprinted in *The New York Times*, March 22, 1992, p. 15.

[7] Carl Bernstein, "The Idiot Culture: Reflections of Post-Watergate Journalism," *The New Republic*, June 8, 1992, p. 22.

[8] Ed Siegel, "What Cheatwood Brings to Ch. 7: Miami-style Glitz or Just Good TV?", *The Boston Globe*, August 20, 1993, p. 41.

[9] M. Salwin and R. Anderson, "The Uses and Gratifications of Supermarket Tabloid Reading by Different Demographic Groups," Paper presented to AEJMC, 1984.

[10] Elizabeth K. Hansen, "Supermarket Tabloids as Sources of Political Information." Paper presented to AEJMVC, 1993.

[11] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Macmillan, 1922). See Chapter One, pp. 1-19.

[12] See: Elihu Katz, Hanna Adoni and Pnina Parness, "Remembering the News: What the Picture Adds to Recall, *Journalism Quarterly*, 54, 1987, pp. 231-239; D.G. Drew and T. Grimes, "Audio-Visual Redundancy and TV News Recall," *Communication Research*, 14.4, 1987, pp. 452-461; J. Son, S.D. Reese, and W. Davie, "Effects of Visual-Verbal Redundancy and Recaps on TV News Learning," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 31:2, 1987; D.K. Davis and J.P. Robinson, "Learning from TV News: How Important are story

attributes?" Paper presented at ICA, 1985.

[13] R. Bernard and G. Coldevin, "Effects of Recall Strategies on TV News Recall and Retention," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 29:4, pp. 407-419, 1985.

[14] M. Edwardson et al, "Demographic Group Recall of News from Videotex and TV Newscasters." Paper presented at AEJMC, 1985.

[15] D.M. Smith, "Effects of Pacing and Recall and Recognition of Information in TV News Programs." Paper presented to AEJMC, 1982.

[16] See for example: Olle Findahl and Brigitta Hoijer, "Some Characteristics of News Memory and Comprehension," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 29, 1985, pp. 379-396; John P. Robinson, "Comprehension of Television News: How Alert is the Audience?" Paper Presented at the Association for Education in Journalism convention, Boston, 1980; W. Russell Neuman, "Patterns of Recall Among Television News Viewers," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 40, 1976, pp. 115-123.

[17] The first experiment in the series focused on the ways in which eight different story production formats influenced viewer recall and level of interest. See: Dona Hayes and Melvin DeFleur, "The Influence of Production Formats on Audience Recall and Interest in Televised Local News Stories." The second experiment dealt with the influence of serial position of a story on recall, interest, and perceived importance. See: Michael Cremedas, Dona Hayes and Melvin DeFleur, "The Influence of Story Position in a Newscast on Viewer Recall, Interest and Importance." Papers presented to AEJMC, 1992.

[18] See: David Barker and Bernard M. Timberg, "Encounters with the Television Image: Thirty Years of Encoding Research," in Stanley Deetz, ed., *Communication Yearbook 15* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1992), pp. 209-238.

[19] Twenty-nine viewers of local television news were polled by telephone and asked to rank their level of interest in eleven categories of news stories. A scale of 1 to 5 was used where 1 was "not at all interested" and 5 was "very interested."

[20] Hayes and DeFleur, op. cit.

[21] Carl I. Hovland, Irving L. Janis and Harold H. Kelley, *Communication and Persuasion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

[22] Cremedas, Hayes and DeFleur, op. cit.

Table 1

Mean Recall, Interest, Importance for Stimulus Story
ONEWAY ANOVA by Group

	Group 1 Traditional	Group 2 Hybrid	Group 3 Tabloid	F prob.
Recall	1.82	2.14	1.65	.13 (ns)
Interest	3.48	3.62	3.58	.91 (ns)
Importance	4.03	4.50	4.44	.16 (ns)

Table 2

Mean Recall, Interest, Importance and MANOVA by Story

	Recession		Court Ruling		City Budget	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Recall	2.10	.86	.812	.394	1.841	.834
Interest	3.28	1.27	3.56	1.27	3.58	1.19
Importance	3.66	1.18	3.89	1.18	4.31	.988

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F
Between-subjects effects				
Within cells	51.60	68	.76	
Within-subject effect				
RECALL	64.18	2	32.09	77.27*
Within cells	56.48	136	.42	
Between-subjects effects				
Within cells	143.68	77	1.87	
Within-subject effect				
INTEREST	4.33	2	2.17	1.57
Within cells	212.33	154	1.38	
Between-subjects effects				
Within cells	133.16	79	1.69	
Within-subject effect				
IMPORTANCE	17.43	2	8.72	8.40*
Within cells	163.90	158	1.04	

* p <.001

APPENDIX A

EXPERIMENTAL NEWSCAST FORMAT

Headlines/Tease	READER
Commercial #1	VTR-SOT
Show Open	BUMP SHOT/MUSIC/TITLES
Story #1	RECESSION: VO-SOT (anchorperson voice-over video with sound-on-tape interview)
Story #2	COURT RULING: VO (anchorperson voice-over video)
Story #3	CITY BUDGET: PKG (reporter pre-produced video/audio package)
Tease weather	READER
Commercial #2	VTR-SOT
Weather	READER/GRAPHICS FULL
Goodbye	READER
Show Close	BUMP SHOT/MUSIC/TITLES

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How Editors and Readers Rank and Rate the Importance of 18 Traditional Standards of Newspaper Excellence

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* * *

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RUNNING HEAD: Standards

How Editors and Readers Rank and Rate the Importance of 18 Traditional Standards of Newspaper Excellence

ABSTRACT

This survey compares how 291 readers and 257 editors (from four broad newspaper circulation groups) differ in evaluating the importance of 18 standards of journalistic quality. Results show that readers and editors agree on the relative ranking of many standards, but there is strong disparity in others. The study also found considerable support for hypotheses that predict that readers and editors of smaller papers value some standards differently than their counterparts at larger papers.

How Editors and Readers Rank and Rate the Importance of 18 Traditional Standards of Newspaper Excellence

A catch-phrase among newspaper editors since the late 1970s has been, "Give readers what they want." What they want, presumably, is what they tell market researchers when asked about content/format preferences. Thus, more and more, in part motivated by the success of "reader-friendly" *USA Today* and some of its imitators, many papers in recent years have emphasized shorter stories, features with personal relevance, news digests, colorful graphics, quick entry points, interactive devices such as audiotex, more sports coverage, more "news you can use," etc.[1]

However, Bogart observed that "what people say they read or want to read . . . does not, or should not, mean that editors will automatically give it to them." The problem is that giving the public what it wants too often translates into giving the public what it is most inclined to consume.[2] Readers' wants may conflict with their informational needs, assuming that it still holds that citizens have a civic duty to be adequately informed about current events and issues related to public policy. Thus, readers' preferences often conflict with professional values of journalists (i.e., how they traditionally define news), so that editors are often criticized for editing predominately from market research.[3]

This dichotomy between professional values and reader preferences can be troubling in other ways. Bogart observed, "Editors' judgments are, by definition, impeccable when it comes to evaluating quality in journalism. Who else, after all, can set standards of excellence?"[4] However, Bogart found that most editors feel that editorial excellence is rewarded by success in circulation. He asked, importantly: "Does this mean that the traits that make a newspaper good are also considered to make it popular?"[5]

This study looks at this problem by examining the degree to which editors and readers agree or disagree about the importance of traditional standards of newspaper excellence. Its aim is to ask readers to put their personal preferences aside and give editors a better idea of what criteria their readers use to judge the "journalistic quality" of their newspaper. In this way, perhaps, the study will encourage editors to pay closer attention to aspects of editorial quality that are most admired by readers. Presumably, this could translate into a boost for circulation without focusing so much on satisfying readers' personal preference. This study also looks at how market size differences may affect editor and reader perceptions of the relative importance of traditional criteria of excellence in assessing the quality of the newspaper they work for or subscribe to.

Background and Literature

There has been a plethora of research, both proprietary and public domain, to examine reader preferences. In the public domain, for example, studies have aimed to determine what younger readers want in a newspaper[6], predict readership from content characteristics[7], and discover reader preferences for design[8] and news mix (e.g., national v. local, or hard v. soft)[9]

There has been some research, too, to determine how editors perceive reader preferences.[10] Bogart compared editors' rankings of the importance of 23 criteria of editorial quality with their rankings of perceived reader interest in those same items. He found that the top three criteria of excellence ranked number 7, 11, and 12, respectively, in terms of editors' perception of reader interest. He noted that readers were assumed to be indifferent to a number of criteria that editors associate with journalistic excellence.[11]

Several studies have examined how journalists and the public compare in assessing story preferences, news values, and newspaper function. Atwood found that among news professionals, desk-bound editors are least able to predict subscriber preferences, but, overall, journalists and readers showed high agreement in preferences.[12] McNulty found an ethical gap between editors and readers, with readers tending to be more discreet and restrained in deciding what is fit to print.[13] Greenberg surveyed editors and readers to compare their perception of the functions of the weekly newspaper.[14] Other reader-editor comparison studies have focused on coverage of specific issues, e.g., attitudes about media portrayals of violence.[15]

Other studies have looked at circulation or market size to explain differences in the way readers perceive and use newspapers. Looking at the small newspaper, for example, Grotta, Larkin, and DePlois found that readers of small dailies supremely value the newspaper for its local information.[16] Carter and Clarke compared readers' preferences for daily and weekly newspapers to explain their interest in "disruptive" and "integrative" news.[17] Griswold and Moore examined how factors such as closeness to community affect readership of news and advertising in a small daily.[18]

Similarly, market size has been used to help explain differences in journalistic values among editors and journalists. Viall found support for a "cosmopolitan/community continuum" of journalistic values; she found that community homogeneity or pluralism, and occupational and organizational influences, may affect the way journalists prioritize journalistic values.[19] Stone and Morrison found that weeklies and small dailies have similar proportions of various content, but found differences related to circulation.[20] Numerous studies have looked at market size as an influence on television news values. For example, Carroll found that, compared with stations in smaller markets, major market stations placed more emphasis on fires, crime, and accidents, as well as local government and politics.[21]

Identifying traditional journalistic standards of excellence is difficult, being based largely on scrutiny of subjective press criticism and qualitative analyses.[22] This is clearly evident in the widely divergent standards employed in the occasional "Best of" or "Top Papers" lists that are published in the popular and trade press.[23] A few studies have employed systematic procedures and quantitative measures to evaluate newspaper quality, but selection of the measures has been largely arbitrary.[24]

Others have taken a systematic approach to identifying and measuring standards by surveying journalists and readers. Swanson did a content analysis of remarks by 373 adults who were asked in a one-city survey what the city's newspaper "should print" (or "what it should be").[25] Connery conducted a small-scale survey of practitioners and professionals to identify some of the best small dailies, then examined those papers to abstract a "preliminary yardstick" of editorial excellence.[26] In a study of 746 editors at large and small dailies, Bogart and associates found that both groups of editors agreed on the rank of the first three attributes of editorial quality (accuracy, impartiality, and investigative enterprise) and the last (literary style). However, small-paper editors gave a higher ranking to civic-mindedness and a lower ranking to specialized staff skills and individuality of the newspaper's character.[27]

In an earlier study, the author of the present study conducted a survey of 257 editors in four different circulation categories, asking them to rank and rate the importance of 18 standards of newspaper quality abstracted from the literature (see Table 1). Results showed that, compared with their smaller-paper counterparts, editors at larger papers tended to more greatly value three standards (staff enterprise, staff professionalism, and comprehensive news coverage). Also, editors of big metro papers tended to more greatly value news interpretation compared with all other editors, although this finding was not as strong. The study found that small-paper editors tended to place greater value on four criteria: community leadership, strong local news coverage, decency, and an experimental standard called the "community press" standard, defined as "emphasis on news coverage that focuses on common community values and helps give readers a sense of individual existence and worth." The study also found that editors of weekly papers do not value editorial independence and a strong editorial page as much as the other editors.[28]

The aim of the present study is to partially replicate the author's earlier survey of editors, this time asking readers in the same four circulation categories how, in assessing the quality of their hometown newspaper, they would rank and rate the importance of the 18 standards of newspaper excellence. In this way, the study's goal is to push aside the usual questions about readers' personal preferences and instead identify aspects of editorial quality that are most important to readers in judging the journalistic quality of their hometown newspaper.

The literature gives skant indication of how readers of small and large papers differ in their evaluation of standards compared with editors of small and large papers. However, it is reasonable to postulate that editors and readers are sensitive to each other's peculiar situation as it relates to size of community and circulation. If that is true, it is reasonable to expect that editors and readers of big papers are likely to value some standards differently than their small-paper counterparts. Focusing on standards that editors of small and large papers disagreed on in the prior study, the present study tests two hypotheses:

H1: Readers of larger papers, like editors of those papers, are more likely than their counterparts at smaller papers to value the standards of staff enterprise, staff professionalism, and comprehensive coverage.

H2: Readers of smaller papers, like editors of those papers, are more likely than their counterparts at larger papers to value the standards of community leadership, strong local news coverage, and decency, as well as the community press standard.

Methodology

In the author's earlier study, surveys were mailed to 400 senior-level editors at 400 newspapers in four circulation groups: large (>140,000), medium (30,000-139,999), and small dailies (<30,000), as well as weeklies (average circulation 6,500). Papers were selected by systematic sampling of all 1,524 U.S. daily newspapers (combining morning and evening papers of the same newspaper enterprise). A sample of 100 editors was drawn from each group of papers; in a few instances in the large-paper category it was necessary to draw two editors from the same paper. Editors were defined as senior-level editorial personnel with supervisory or management responsibility or in charge of a page or section of the newspaper. With weeklies this usually meant the "editor" or "editor/publisher." The study yielded 257 replies representing 58 large, 65 medium, and 64 small dailies, and 64 weeklies.

The main part of that study's questionnaire asked respondents to rank the order of importance of nine organizational standards of newspaper excellence, and to do the same with nine content standards. Each item was followed by asking respondents to rate the importance of each standard as "essential,' or "important but not essential," or "not particularly important."

In the present study, the names of the 251 newspapers in the earlier survey were used and letters were sent in the spring of 1993 to circulation directors at those papers asking them to randomly draw names and addresses of 5-10 home-delivery (non-mail) subscribers. In a few cases where papers had folded or merged since the earlier study, substitutes were drawn using the same systematic sampling method employed in the earlier study. Thirty-seven large, 42 mid-size, and 43 small papers, as well as 26 weeklies, responded. To obtain enough names and addresses for a minimum of 200 subscribers in each group, and a total sample of 800, it was necessary to obtain subscribers from 18 additional weeklies, again using the same systematic sampling method and the most current *E&P International Year Book*.

In the spring and summer of 1993, 800 questionnaires were mailed, followed 14 days later by a reminder postcard. A modified

Total Design Method for mail surveys was used.[29] Personalized cover letters, survey booklets, and postage-paid return envelopes were sent. Budgetary restrictions prevented a second mail-out to nonrespondents. Like the earlier study, the main part of the questionnaire asked respondents to rank and rate the importance of nine organizational and nine content standards.

The overall response rate was 36.4 (N=291). The response rate for subscribers of large papers was quite strong (43.5 percent; N=87) compared with the other subgroups, which ranged from 33.5 to 35 percent (N=67-70). The four circulation groups of subscribers were compared using the SPSSx statistical package.

Results

Survey demographics indicate the survey reached a fairly representative mix of subscribers, with percentages reasonably conforming with findings from a multitude of newspaper readership studies.[31] Generally, subscribers tended to be older (median age: 51) and well educated (66.4% attended college). They also tended toward a stable life with strong community involvement (90% owning home, 77.1% married, and 93.2% expecting to live in the same community in five years). Gender mix: 55.1% male, 44.9% female.

For a broad perspective of the results, Table 1 shows the *relative* rankings by readers as a whole and editors as a whole. Among the organizational standards, both groups identically ranked the importance of seven standards. Both groups ranked integrity, impartiality, editorial independence, editorial courage, community leadership, staff professionalism, and influence numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9, respectively. However, there was great disparity in the way the two groups valued staff enterprise and decency. While editors ranked staff enterprise number 4, readers ranked it number 8. Decency shows a reverse pattern, with editors ranking it 8 and readers ranking it 4. Staff enterprise and decency were the only organizational standards showing statistically significant disagreement between the two groups. Turning to the ratings, Table 2 shows that 65.4% of all editors rated staff enterprise as essential, while only 30.1% of readers did so. Similarly, 64.9% of all readers rated decency as an essential standard, while only 45.3% of editors said the same. There was also noteworthy disagreement about impartiality, with 95.3% of editors and only 84.8% of readers rating it essential.

Among the content standards, Table 1 shows that both groups identically ranked the top three standards--strong local news coverage, accuracy, and good writing, in that order. Greatest disparity was found with visual appeal, followed by lack of sensationalism. Editors ranked visual appeal number 4 while readers ranked it at the bottom. Lack of sensationalism showed a reverse pattern, with editors ranking it 8 and readers ranking it 4. With the other standards the relative rankings were closer. Readers ranked comprehensive coverage and the community press (CP) standard higher than editors (7 v. 9 and 5 v. 6, respectively), while editors ranked news interpretation and strong editorial page higher than readers (7 v. 8 and 5 v. 6, respectively). Only two content standards (strong editorial page and the CP standard) failed to show statistically significant disagreement between the two groups. Looking at the ratings, Table 2 shows that editors and readers most strongly disagreed on two standards, strong local coverage and visual appeal. Fully 95.7% of editors and only 79.7% of readers said strong local coverage was essential. Similarly, 44.7% of editors said visual appeal was essential, while only 18.8% of readers agreed.

Focusing on the four organizational standards that comprise Hypothesis 1, Tables 1 and 2 show that there was no significant disagreement between editors as a whole and readers as a whole in both the rankings (median scores) and ratings of community leadership. Table 3, however, shows that readers of big papers ranked this standard significantly lower than editors of those papers. A little less than half of both editors and readers rated this standard as essential. There was no significant difference among the four groups of readers, although their ratings were in the predicted pattern as small-paper readers tended to value this standard more than big-paper readers.

Tables 1 and 2 show that with staff enterprise and decency there was significant disagreement comparing editors and readers in the aggregate in both the rankings and ratings. Tables 2 and 3 show that, compared with editors' rankings and ratings, readers across the board agreed staff enterprise deserves less attention.

Disagreement was especially striking between editors and readers of large dailies; 81.3% of the editors rated staff enterprise as essential while only 24.7% of the readers agreed. Disagreement between small-paper editors and readers was not significant. There was no significant difference among the four groups of readers. Turning to the decency standard, there was a mixed pattern among reader groups in the rankings, although readers across the board valued this standard less than the editors. Again, however, the disagreement among weekly editors and readers was not significant. With ratings of this standard, all reader groups were roughly even, giving decency a higher rating than the editors. Editors of big and mid-size papers rated decency much less essential than readers, while editors of smaller papers were more closely aligned with readers' ratings.

Tables 1 and 2 show mixed results for the fourth hypothesized organizational standard, staff professionalism. There was no significant disagreement comparing editors as a whole and readers as a whole in the rankings, but they did disagree in the ratings. Table 3 shows that in the rankings the only significant disagreement was between big-city editors and their readers, who valued this standard less than the editors. Table 2 shows that in the ratings there was significant disagreement among readers as small-daily readers rated this standard higher than other readers. Strong disagreement was found in the large-daily category where 71.4% of the editors rated staff professionalism as essential and only 31.4% of their readers agreed.

Turning to rankings and ratings of the three content standards, Table 1 shows there was no significant disagreement comparing editors and readers aggregately in both the rankings (median scores) and ratings of one standard, the so-called "community press" standard. Table 3 shows that, as predicted, readers of smaller papers tended to rank this standard higher than readers of bigger papers. The only significant disagreement, however, was in the large daily category. There was no significant disagreement between reader groups in the rankings or ratings. Table 2 shows that in the ratings there was strong agreement between editors and readers in each circulation group.

Tables 1 and 2 show that with the two other hypothesized content standards--strong local coverage and comprehensive coverage--there was significant disagreement comparing editors and readers aggregately in both the rankings and ratings. Tables 2 and 3 show that, compared with editors' rankings and ratings, readers across the board agreed strong local coverage deserves less attention. In the rankings, disagreement between editors and readers of both small daily and weekly papers was not significant. There was strong disagreement between the four reader groups in both the rankings and the ratings, with readers of larger papers generally placing less value on the importance of strong local coverage compared with readers of smaller papers. In the ratings, the only significant disagreement, however, was in the small daily category where all editors rated strong local coverage as essential and 86.8% of readers agreed.

Looking at comprehensive coverage, readers in all groups ranked this standard higher than editors, but significant disagreement occurred only in the midsize and small daily groups. There was strong disagreement between the four reader groups in both the rankings and ratings, with readers of larger papers following the predicted pattern by giving this standard a higher ranking than their counterparts at smaller papers. The primary difference in the ratings was between daily readers and weekly readers as approximately 34-43% of the daily readers rated comprehensive coverage as essential, compared with only 9% of weekly readers.

Theoretically, if editors and readers conform in the way they value the standards of newspaper quality, we would expect to see no significant disagreement between readers and editors in the same circulation category. The same pattern that held with editors across the four groups would hold with readers across the four groups. None of this study's seven hypothesized standards achieved this ideal pattern as some differences persisted. However, looking at editor-reader comparisons in each circulation group in both the rankings and ratings, one has to be impressed by a generally high incidence of agreement.

Putting aside statistical significance for a moment, a glance at the overall patterns relating to the hypothesized standards indicates considerable support for the predicted direction. This is especially true with comprehensive coverage and the CP standard where we see that the rankings and ratings indicate that readers of larger papers tend to value comprehensive coverage more, and the CP standard less, compared with their counterparts at smaller papers.

With the remainder of the hypothesized standards, the picture is more mixed. With community leadership, the pattern of reader rankings is jumbled, but the ratings are in the predicted pattern as readers of larger papers, especially big metro papers, seem to place less importance on this standard. Reader rankings of decency are mixed; the ratings, though flat, indicate that big-city readers rate this standard lower than other reader groups. With strong local news coverage, reader rankings conform to the predicted pattern as readers from smaller papers tend to rank it higher than their counterparts at big papers; yet reader ratings of this standard are flat. Reader rankings of staff professionalism, though a bit mixed, favor the predicted pattern of greater valuing by readers of larger papers; the ratings are mixed. The reader rankings of staff enterprise are flat, but reader ratings go against the predicted direction as readers of larger papers tend to value this standard less than do readers of smaller papers.

Summary and Conclusion

This study found that, taken as a whole, editors and readers are in considerable harmony in the way they value the relative importance of most standards of newspaper quality. Of the 18 standards used in this study, editors and readers agreed on the relative rank of importance of 10 standards. Clearly at the top of everyone's list were the organizational standards of integrity, impartiality, and editorial independence, in that order, while a paper's influence, or high regard by opinion leaders, was at the bottom. Among content standards, editors and readers alike agreed that the most important criteria are strong local news coverage, accuracy, and good writing.

The greatest disparity between readers and editors relates to the organizational standards of staff enterprise and decency, and the content standards of visual appeal and lack of sensationalism. Compared with their readers, editors much more highly valued staff enterprise and visual appeal, while giving a much lower value to lack of sensationalism and decency.

If it is true that editorial excellence is rewarded by success in circulation, that readers are more likely to do business with a paper that demonstrates journalistic qualities that readers strongly admire, the lesson for newspaper editors may be to reconsider their apparent emphasis on staff enterprise (aggressive and original reporting) and visual appeal in news presentation (use of typography, photography, graphics, color, layout, and design). The latter may indicate an incipient reader backlash to the newspaper industry's megatrend to "reader friendly" content/format, dazzling graphics, and snazzy news packaging. Instead, perhaps editors should consider concentrating more on the decency of content (reflecting a sense of morals and cleanliness) and curbing sensationalism.

The study also found considerable support for the study's two hypotheses dealing with how editors and readers of different size newspapers may value certain criteria of excellence differently. However, data do not provide clear-but, unambiguous data for any of the seven hypothesized standards, although generally the predicted patterns held.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that, compared with readers of smaller papers, readers of larger papers would join editors of larger papers in more highly valuing comprehensive coverage, staff professionalism, and staff enterprise. Readers of larger papers ranked comprehensive coverage higher than their counterparts at smaller papers, although, not surprisingly, this standard appears to have less value for weekly papers. With staff professionalism, reader-editor disagreement was mostly with big-city papers where roughly seven out of 10 editors rated this standard essential and only three out of 10 readers agreed. With staff enterprise, readers generally tended to rank this standard much lower than editors, but the editor-reader disparity was greatest with big-city papers and least with weeklies.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that readers of smaller papers, like editors of those papers, are more likely than their counterparts at larger papers to value the standards of community leadership, strong local news, the community press standard, and decency. With community leadership, the data mildly support the predicted direction. Somewhat firmer support was found with strong local news coverage and the community press standard; with the latter, there was considerable reader-editor disparity among big-city papers as readers in this category were inclined to give a higher ranking to this standard than their editors. With decency, the predicted pattern was obtained, but editors and readers at smaller papers tended to be in closer harmony, compared with their counterparts at larger papers.

While the relative rankings indicate that all editors should consider placing more value on decency and less on staff enterprise, the editor-reader disparities found in this study suggest that editors of big-city papers, especially, should consider paying somewhat less attention to staff enterprise and be more mindful of decency. Furthermore, while the relative rankings indicate reader-editor agreement about the importance of staff professionalism and the community press standard, editors of big metro papers might consider reducing emphasis on staff professionalism ("willingness to hire and retain top personnel") and paying more attention to "emphasis on news coverage that focuses on common community values and helps gives readers a sense of individual existence and worth."

The suggestion to place less emphasis on staff enterprise and staff professionalism may sound absurd to editors of major metropolitan dailies, but perhaps the readers are hinting at an elitism they detect in these papers. Perhaps readers feel that these papers take themselves, and their jobs, a little too seriously.

It may be that the most useful finding of this study for all editors is that readers agree with them on the most important standards of newspaper quality. Editors thus should be encouraged to maintain the highest regard for those standards they most cherish: Integrity, strong local news coverage, impartiality, accuracy, editorial independence, and good writing.

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TABLE 1

Comparison of Editors' and Readers' Composite Median Score and Relative Rank of Standards of Newspaper Excellence

Standard	Editors'[a]		p	Readers'[b]		p	E v. R p
ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS:							
Integrity	(1.51)	1	ns	(1.79)	1	ns	ns
Staff Enterprise	(4.13)	4	*	(6.08)	8	ns	***
Community Leadership	(5.03)	6	**	(4.38)	6	*	ns
Editorial Independence	(3.33)	3	*	(3.02)	3	ns	ns
Staff Professionalism	(5.73)	7	**	(5.88)	7	ns	ns
Editorial Courage	(4.46)	5	ns	(4.25)	5	ns	ns
Decency	(6.52)	8	**	(4.03)	4	ns	***
Influence	(8.20)	9	ns	(8.12)	9	ns	ns
Impartiality	(1.83)	2	ns	(2.11)	2	*	ns
CONTENT STANDARDS:							
News Interpretation	(6.17)	7	ns	(5.45)	8	ns	**
Lack of Sensationalism	(6.23)	8	ns	(4.78)	4	**	***
Strong Local Coverage	(1.03)	1	**	(2.00)	1	***	***
Visual Appeal	(5.08)	4	ns	(6.42)	9	ns	***
Accuracy	(1.27)	2	ns	(4.00)	2	ns	***
Strong Editorial Page	(5.28)	5	*	(5.24)	6	ns	ns
CP Standard	(5.32)	6	**	(5.04)	5	ns	ns
Comprehensive Coverage	(7.27)	9	**	(5.44)	7	***	***
Good Writing	(3.56)	3	ns	(4.24)	3	ns	***

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001 (Median Test); [a]N=291, [b]N=257

Organizational Standards: "Integrity--a newspaper's keen sense of professional ethics"; "Staff enterprise--aggressive, original reporting"; "Community leadership--willingness to take an active role in the betterment and welfare of community"; "Editorial independence--freedom from outside pressure by political interest groups and economic forces"; "Staff professionalism--willingness to hire, retain top personnel"; "Editorial courage--willingness to fight against wrong"; "Decency--a sense of morals and cleanliness"; "Influence--high regard by opinion leaders"; "Impartiality--fairness in gathering, reporting the news."

Content Standards: "News interpretation--emphasis on interpretation, analysis, backgrounders"; "Lack of sensationalism"; "Strong local coverage"; "Visual appeal--effective, attractive presentation of news through use of visual tools such as typography, photography, graphics, color, layout, design"; "Accuracy"; "Strong editorial page"; "CP (Community Press) standard--emphasis on news coverage that focuses on common community values and helps give readers a sense of individual existence and worth"; "Comprehensive coverage--coverage of news from beyond the newspaper's immediate distribution area"; "Good writing."

TABLE 2

Comparison of How Editors and Readers Rate Hypothesized Standards as "Essential"

Standard	Large Dailies			Mid-size Dailies			Small Dailies			Weeklies			All Eds.		All Rders.		All E v. R
	Eds. (%)	Rders. (%)	p	Eds. (%)	Rders. (%)	p	Eds. (%)	Rders. (%)	p	Eds. (%)	Rders (%)	p	(%)	p	(%)	p	p
Staff Enterprise	81.3	24.7	***	67.7	29.0	***	68.8	33.3	***	43.8	34.8	ns	65.4	***	30.1	ns	***
Community Leadership	34.4	33.7	ns	38.5	52.9	ns	54.7	59.4	ns	62.5	50.0	ns	47.5	**	48.1	ns	ns
Staff Professionalism	71.4	31.4	***	53.8	33.8	ns	42.9	52.2	ns	25.0	28.8	ns	48.2	***	36.3	*	*
Decency	31.3	58.8	**	36.6	69.6	***	55.6	69.1	ns	57.8	63.6	*	45.3	**	64.9	ns	***
Strong Local Coverage	93.7	85.5	ns	98.5	85.5	ns	100.0	86.8	*	90.6	89.6	ns	95.7	ns	79.7	***	***
CP Standard	30.2	31.9	ns	34.4	31.9	ns	41.9	45.6	ns	50.0	44.8	ns	39.1	ns	38.1	ns	ns
Comprehensive Coverage	56.3	42.9	ns	23.1	42.9	ns	19.0	34.3	ns	3.1	9.0	*	25.4	***	36.8	***	**

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001 (Chi Square); N=257 editors, 291 readers

TABLE 3

Comparison of Editors' and Readers' Median Rank and Relative Rank of Standards

Standard	Large Dailies			Mid-size Dailies			Small Dailies			Weeklies		
	Editors	Readers	p	Editors	Readers	p	Editors	Readers	p	Editors	Readers	p
Staff Enterprise	(3.73) 4	(6.33) 8	***	(4.00) 4	(6.64) 8	***	(4.17) 4	(6.63) 7	***	(5.09) 6	(6.06) 7	ns
Community Leadership	(6.07) 7	(5.00) 6	*	(6.07) 7	(6.13) 6	ns	(5.63) 6	(5.00) 4-5	ns	(3.60) 3	(4.19) 6	ns
Staff Professionalism	(4.57) 6	(5.62) 7	*	(5.43) 6	(6.58) 7	ns	(6.13) 7	(7.05) 8	ns	(7.00) 8	(6.42) 8	ns
Decency	(7.25) 8	(3.88) 4	***	(6.35) 8	(5.57) 5	**	(6.73) 8	(5.00) 4-5	***	(5.50) 7	(4.13) 5	ns
Strong Local Coverage	(1.83) 2	(3.62) 2	***	(1.17) 1	(2.78) 2	***	(.78) 1	(1.17) 1	ns	(.82) 1	(.94) 1	ns
CP Standard	(7.19) 9	(6.16) 8	*	(5.29) 6	(5.36) 7	ns	(5.13) 5	(4.17) 3	ns	(3.63) 3	(4.27) 3	ns
Comprehensive Coverage	(5.22) 5	(4.13) 5	ns	(7.29) 9	(5.50) 8	***	(7.40) 9	(5.17) 6	***	(8.32) 9	(8.03) 9	ns

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001; N=257 editors, 291 readers

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Broadcast Hoaxes: Good Clean Fun or Public Harm?
A Study of the FCC's Regulation of Broadcast Hoaxes

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Broadcast Hoaxes: Good Clean Fun or Public Harm?
A Study of the FCC's Content Regulation of Broadcast Hoaxes

Abstract

Citing a recent number of potentially harmful broadcast hoaxes, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in May 1992, adopted a ruling prohibiting hoaxes that "broadcast false information concerning a crime or catastrophe." Prior to this the FCC's regulation of broadcast hoaxes was limited to rules regulating news staging, falsification of news, and failure to broadcast in the public interest. Official comments and discouragement of adoption of the amendment were filed by several national broadcasters. This study looks at the scope of broadcast hoaxes, including the specific hoaxes that prompted the FCC anti-hoax amendment, and explores the amendment adoption process and the relationship between the FCC and broadcasters.

BROADCAST HOAXES: GOOD CLEAN FUN OR PUBLIC HARM? A STUDY OF THE FCC'S CONTENT REGULATION OF BROADCAST HOAXES

A: Introduction to Broadcast Hoaxes

Ever since Orson Welles's famous 1938 radio broadcast of "War of the Worlds," the government has been concerned with the far-reaching effects of the broadcast medium. Hoaxes have ranged from the myriad of April Fool's pranks, including the announcement in 1991 that the Democratic party planned on nominating George Bush at its Democratic Convention,[1] to station WKLH's (Milwaukee) announcement that the IRS planned a tax amnesty.[2] Other hoaxes have nothing to do with April Fool's Day and are more inventive and bizarre. Some examples include the recent trends by radio stations to use "help-wanted" billboard ads to introduce a new on-air announcer[3], and phony wedding announcements concerning one or more disc jockeys. Here, a fake wedding announcement is sent to a local newspaper with a picture featuring male on-air talent dressed as women. The day the announcement appears, the hoax is announced by the station and a contest is held for listeners to identify the phony bride or couple.[4]

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[1] Comments of National Public Radio, In Re Matter of Amendment of Part 73 of the Commission's Rules Regarding Broadcast Hoaxes, MM Docket 91-314.

[2] "Station Stunts Tread Fine Line of Humor and Hoax," Broadcasting, 120 (April 8, 1991) :54-5.

[3] "Station Stunts Tread Fine Line of Humor and Hoax," p. 55.

While concern does not apply to such harmless April Fool's Day pranks, consideration over the effects of hoax broadcasts has caused the government to enact a number of regulations on broadcast content, presumably due to the "powerfulness" inherent in broadcasting.[5] The pervasiveness of broadcast as well as other factors such as vividness and illusion of reality have caused some audiences to think broadcast dramas and recreations are real.[6]

Hoaxes have been a large part of broadcasting, both radio and television, for a number of years, and the FCC has reviewed each case to decide what type of punishment, if any, is appropriate. Prior to its introduction of anti-hoax regulation, the FCC relied primarily on its rules against news staging, falsification of news, and failure to adhere to the basic obligation of broadcasting in the public interest, to regulate broadcast hoaxes. But in the absence of a written hoax rule, regulation, according to Chuck Kelly, chief of the FCC Mass Media Bureau and Enforcement Division, "comes down to a question of judgment between what constitutes a humorous attempt at kidding the public for April Fool's Day to a serious case that could cause significant adverse reactions or adverse problems in the community."[7]

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[4] Mark Fitzgerald, "Radio Jocks launch new newspaper hoax: Send in phony wedding announcements of themselves dressed as women." Editor & Publisher 124 (August 31, 1991) :17.

[5] Marc A. Franklin and David A. Anderson, Mass Media Law: Cases and Materials, 4th ed. (Westbury, New York: The Foundation Press, Inc., 1990), p. 873.

[6] Ibid, p. 874.

The purpose of this study is to trace the history of broadcast hoaxes that have received recent attention from the FCC. While the majority of hoaxes are harmless pranks, designed to entertain, some hoaxes have caused potential danger to the public and consequently have been investigated by the FCC. This study reviews the FCC's regulation of broadcast hoaxes, particularly those hoaxes identified by the FCC as precipitating the need to reregulate hoaxes. Cases and correspondence between the FCC and respective broadcast stations were examined in FCC Reports and Records, as well as the stations' files housed at the FCC.

This study also examines the FCC's process of adopting new policy rules and amendments by tracing the steps taken when adopting the new anti-hoax ruling. The proposed anti-hoax amendment, as well as comments and recommendations filed by various media organizations, were examined at the FCC's Public Documents Room. In addition, the amendment as written upon adoption and other correspondence concerning the adoption process were examined.

B: The Cases That Prompted FCC Action

On November 14, 1991, the FCC released a notice of a proposed amendment that would directly address broadcast hoaxes in place of other FCC regulations concerning falsification and deliberate fabrication of news events that traditionally had been used to govern hoaxes.[8] The FCC cited several recent broadcast hoaxes that "resulted in the use of what may have been substantial public safety resources to respond to fabricated events."[9]

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[7] "Station Stunts Tread Fine Line of Humor and Hoax," p. 55.

In *Walton Broadcasting* (1980), license renewal was denied for WIKX in Tucson, Arizona, because the station staged a fake kidnapping of its disc jockey. The hoax resulted in a flood of calls to local police, who then requested that the station end the hoax. The station refused and ended the hoax only once it was exposed by a local television show.[10] In addition to broadcasting the hoax, the commission found that Walton, the licensee, had failed to employ prompt corrective measures concerning the hoax that amounted to "active indifference" sufficient to sustain a finding of gross negligence.[11]

Another case cited involved a fake murder confession. On June 13, 1990, KROQ-FM's (Los Angeles) morning show hosts Kevin Ryder and Gene (Bean) Baxter began a segment called "Confess Your Crime" in which listeners were encouraged to call and reveal "crimes" they had committed.[12] Among the callers was an anonymous man who claimed to have killed his girlfriend. The

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[8] In re Amendment of Part 73 of the Commission's Rule's Regarding Broadcast Hoaxes, *Notice of Proposed Rule making*, MM Docket no. 91-314, 6 FCC Rcd 6953 (1991).

[9] *Notice of Proposed Rule Making*, p. 2.

[10] *In re Application of Walton Broadcasting, (KIKX, Tucson), For Renewal of License*, 78 FCC 2d 857 (1980); 83 FCC 2d 440 (1980).

[11] *See Walton,* 83 FCC 2d 440, p. 441.

[12] In re *Inquiry into Broadcast of Hoax Murder Confession over Station KROQ-FM, Pasadena, California*,MM Docket 91-214, 6 FCC Rcd 7262 (1991).

confession drew a great deal of publicity from local television stations covering the murder confession as well as the NBC series "Unsolved Mysteries," which twice ran a segment about the unusual case.[13] The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department also launched a 10-month search for the killer based on "hundreds of leads that came from across the nation."[14]

After a six-week investigation, a Los Angeles Times reporter discovered that the voice of the confessed killer sounded similar to that of Doug Roberts, a newly hired KROQ night-time disc jockey. Announcers Ryder and Bean immediately admitted they had orchestrated the hoax with Roberts (who, at the time, was an announcer at a radio station in Mesa, Arizona) and apologized for their cover-up.[15] The station, and its owner, Infinity Broadcasting, immediately suspended the two announcers who admitted "We didn't think it was going to go this far."[16] The station also ordered the announcers to reimburse the Sheriff's Department $12,170 for the lengthy investigation and further ordered them to perform 149 hours of community service work. [17]

Despite these disciplinary actions, station management and

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[13] M.L. Stein, "Newspaper Exposes Radio Hoax: Two disc jockeys suspended after Los Angeles Times Writer breaks story that they orchestrated a phony on-air murder confession," Editor & Publisher, 124 (April 27, 1991) :20. See also, "FCC admonishes KROQ-FM for murder hoax," Broadcasting, 121 (Dec. 9, 1991) :31; "FCC Admonishes Station for Airing Hoax," News Media and the Law, 16 (Winter, 1992) :51-2.

[14] Stein, Ibid.

[15] Stein, Ibid

[16] Stein, Ibid.

[17] News Media and the Law, Ibid.

Infinity officials were ordered to Washington to testify before the FCC's chief administrative law judge because "the on-hand information raises substantial questions of fact" as to Infinity's and the station's prior knowledge of the hoax.[18]

In its ruling, the FCC was satisfied that both KROQ management and Infinity officials knew nothing of the hoax and subsequent cover-up. The FCC noted that although the station and licensee (Infinity) had no part in the hoax and took swift action once the deceit was uncovered, the commission's adherence to Empire Broadcasting found "it is well established that licensees are ultimately responsible for the actions of their employees."[19] Therefore, Infinity, as licensee of KROQ-FM, was admonished for "broadcasting the type of false and misleading information which violates the Commission's general policy requiring licensees to program their stations in the public interest."[20]

Another case cited by the FCC in the proposed amendment pertained to the fake nuclear war attack announcement by KSHE-FM in Crestwood, Missouri. On January 29, 1991, the station interrupted a song with an "official civil defense warning" that the United States was under nuclear attack. The announcement was preceded by a civil defense siren and announced "This is not a test."[21]

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[18] Bill Holland, "FCC Digging Deeper Into the Hoax Call, Orders Infinity, KROQ Staff to D.C.," Billboard, July 27, 1991. p. 13.

[19] Empire Broadcasting Corp., 25 FCC 2d 68 (1070). In Empire, a licensee was ruled accountable for actions of an employee who violated technical and program log requirements.

[20] In re: MM Docket No. 91-214, Ibid.

The FCC issued its letter of inquiry the next day and concluded that no disclaimer had preceded the :50 nuclear war attack announcement, and that the first explanation about the hoax (an apology by the disc jockey) did not occur until two hours after the original hoax announcement. In addition, an apology and disclaimer by the station itself did not air until nearly 4 1/2 hours after the original attack announcement.[22]

The disc jockey who played the announcement explained that it was not meant as a hoax but rather as a "serious political statement, (pointing to the horrors of war) in the form of a dramatization."[23] But the FCC noted that such an announcement during the early days of the United States' war effort in the Persian Gulf clearly had the potential to cause alarm among the public.

The commission referred to its 1985 Policy and Statement Order when stating that the station had deliberately falsified its programming and had not properly identified the announcement of a dramatization:

> In this general connection, we note that a current broadcast of a program such as "War of the Worlds," without cautionary language, would violate Commission policies -- i.e. both our general policy requiring licensees to program their stations in the public interest, and the more specific policy against deliberate distortion or falsification of

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[21] Notice of Apparent Liability, Emmis Broadcasting Corp. of St. Louis, Licensee, KSHE(FM), Crestwood, MO., 8210-MD.

[22] Ibid, p. 2289.

[23] Ibid, p. 2289.

programming.[24]

The commission also charged that the station employed a "substantial delay" in clarifying the nuclear war announcement as a dramatization. In addition, the inclusion of a civil defense warning tone, which closely simulated the tone used for the Emergency Broadcast System, clearly violated the integrity of the warning system.[25]

The commission cited all of these violations but, according to current rules, could fine the station only for the broadcast of the false civil EBS warning tone.[26] The station was fined $25,000, the maximum allowed by Section 503(b)(2) of the Communications Act.[27]

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[24] See Fourth Order Eliminating Unnecessary Broadcasting Regulations, 57 RR 2d 939 (1985). Known as the "Fourth Underbrush Order," this policy eliminated an FCC policy rule regulating scare announcements because the policy constituted "regulatory overkill." However, the FCC did not abandon its commitment to enforcement of a licensee's obligation to broadcast in the public interest.

[25] See 47 C.F.R. sections 73.909 and 73.910, which set policy for the authentication of an actual Emergency Broadcast System warning. Section 909 Standard Operating Procedures, contains detailed operation instruction which are used for activating, terminating and testing the National EBS. Section 910 outlines the "Authenticator Word List" system - verification words and procedures distributed and changed each year by the FCC.

[26] See 47 U.S.C.A. section 325, False Distress Signals: No person within the jurisdiction of the United States shall knowingly utter or transmit, or cause to be uttered or transmitted, any false or fraudulent signal of distress, or communication relating thereto.

[27] The FCC amended its Policy Statement for Assessing Fines in July 1991, raising the maximum fines for "each violation or each day of a continuing violation," to $25,000 against broadcasters, cable operators or applicants for such facilities, $100,000 against common carriers, and $10,000 against others. See In the Matter of Standards for Assessing Forfeitures, 6 FCC Rcd 4695. The policy statement also outlines Upward and Downward Adjustment Criteria as

Another case cited by the FCC was the fake announcement by WALE-AM (Rhode Island) that one of its on-air announcers had been shot in the head. On July 9, 1991, WALE was off-air for one hour (4:42-5:45 p.m.) for service to the transmitter. At 5:30 p.m., announcer Steve White, whose shift took place during that time, left the building. As he left, White remarked to Thomas Moriarty, WALE news director, that if the station went back on the air before the end of his shift at 5:55 p.m., Moriarty should announce that White had been shot in the head while smoking a cigar outside the building. When the station indeed returned to the air at 5:45 p.m, Moriarty announced on the air that White had been shot in the head.[28] Within minutes, local media and local police were at the scene attempting to uncover the facts.[29]

The FCC acknowledged that WALE management, upon hearing the announcement, immediately took the program off the air and ran a disclaimer within one minute of the original announcement. This disclaimer was subsequently aired every half hour for 30 hours.[30] In addition, WALE immediately fired White, Moriarty,

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a guide for assessing fines based on the degree of penalty involved in each case. (see p. 4700)

[28] Letter, Licensee, Radio Station WALE-AM, Providence, Rhode Island, 7 FCC Rcd 2345 (1992).

[29] Ibid.

[30] Letter, WALE-AM, Ibid. In its disclaimer, WALE Program Director, Rob Micheals, explained that the announcement was an attempt to "dramatize a fictional news account of an assassination attempt on the life of announcer Steve White. I want to tell you that absolutely no harm was done to Steve White. The incident you may have heard was not true, and WALE's management and WALE's owner, Frank Battaglia, had no knowledge nor did they participate in this hoax in any way.... I want to repeat that absolutely nothing happened to Steve White, that this was a hoax, and all participants in this hoax have been terminated from WALE's employ."

and producer Ken Torres, who had refused to stop the hoax announcement.[31]

While the FCC took WALE's swift action into account the station was still admonished for failing to broadcast programming in the public interest.[32] Although WALE "(apparently) neither knew, approved, nor ratified the false announcement that one of your on-air personnel had been shot,"[33] the FCC relied on *Empire Broadcasting* that licensees are ultimately responsible for the actions of their employees.[34] The commission also pointed out that even swift, remedial action taken by WALE management did not nullify punishment.[35]

C: *The FCC's Hoax Amendment as Originally Proposed*

On November 14, 1991, the FCC released its proposal for an amendment to the Communications Act, regarding the regulation of broadcast hoaxes.[36] The commission cited the previous cases as necessitating the need for a renewal of regulation because such hoaxes "resulted in the use of what may have been substantial

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Micheals concluded by apologizing on behalf of the station's advertisers, staff and management. (See Appendix, p. 2346).

[31] Ibid

[32] See Policy Statement and Order, Ibid.

[33] *Letter, WALE-AM,* Ibid.

[34] See *Empire Broadcasting Corp.*Ibid.

[35] See *Cate Communications Corp.,* 60 RR 2d 1386 (1986); Licensees will not be excused for past violations by reasons of subsequent remedial action.

[36] *Notice of Proposed Rule Making,* Ibid.

public safety resources to respond to fabricated events."[37] Although the FCC had abandoned its policy concerning scare announcements in 1985, the commission did not believe this relieved licensees of their general obligation to broadcast in the public interest.[38]

The commission explained that the recent hoaxes had "highlighted the limitations on our enforcement flexibility which the absence of a specific Commission rule addressing hoaxes imposes."[39] While the commission's policy against news staging might fit some hoax cases, it would not apply to all and involved no provisions for monetary fines.[40] In these cases, as with most hoax cases, the commission had only two choices of penalty, admonishment or revocation of a station's license. The commission proposed the amendment to give it more options when dealing with hoax broadcasts, "allowing a sanction less drastic than license revocation, but with more deterrence value than admonition."[41]

In drafting the proposed amendment, the commission acknowledged a number of issues concerning both the need and the appropriateness of such an amendment. The commission stated that while it sought more control and deterrence over harmful broadcast hoaxes, it did not wish to cause an "undue chilling effect on broadcaster's speech."[42] This effort necessitated avoiding an overbroad regulation, much like those the commission abandoned in the Fourth Underbrush Order. The commission further stated that:

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[37] Ibid, p. 1.

[38] See Fourth Order Eliminating Unnecessary Broadcast Regulation. Ibid. The commission ruled that a broadcast like "War of the Worlds," run without disclaimers might violate the Commission's general policy requiring licensees to program their stations in the public interest, and the more specific policy against deliberate distortion of falsification of programming.

[39] Notice of Proposed Rule Making, p.2.

[40] Ibid, p. 3.

[41] Ibid, p.2.

> It is not our intent to address harmless pranks, or to deter some broadcasts that might upset some listeners but do not pose a substantial threat to public health and safety. For example, we do not intend to reach incidents such as the April Fool's joke...it is our intent to focus instead on a narrow category of cases that present the potential for substantial public harm.[43]

The commission suggested it believed such a rule would have to address specifically three elements of the violation: false content, direct harm, and foreseeability of the harm.[44] First, in order to be liable for a hoax, a licensee must know or have prior knowledge that the material broadcast was false.[45] The commission acknowledged that by its very nature fictional programming would fall into this category since it is, by definition, false. The commission suggested that other provisions of the rule would adequately protect against inclusion of all fictional programming, and also suggested (and sought comment) that the rule only apply to false reports of crimes and catastrophes.[46]

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[42] Ibid, p. 2.

[43] Ibid, p. 2.

[44] Ibid. p.2.

[45] Ibid, p. 2.

[46] Ibid, p. 2.

Second, the commission proposed that the hoax "must have directly caused immediate, substantial and actual public harm."[47] The commission proposed a number of definitions of "public harm" including damage to the health and safety of the public, diversion of public law enforcement agencies, and damage to property. The commission also defined "immediate" as "that the harm would have to occur contemporaneously with or shortly after the broadcast." The commission sought comment on both these definitions as well as the need for inclusion of "substantial harm."[48]

Third, the commission proposed that the harm must be foreseeable.[49] To protect against an undue chilling effect, the public harm would be foreseeable only "if the licensee could expect, with a significant degree of certainty, that such harm would occur as a result of the hoax." The commission sought comment on the very nature of foreseeability, including the content of the programming, the date it occurred (e.g. April Fool's Day), and the number and nature of public complaints.[50]

To this end, the commission offered the proposed hoax rule and invited comments concerning the rule's content, appropriateness, and finally, whether the language of the rule was "impermissibly vague or overbroad." Commentors were also asked to remark about the rule's First Amendment implications.[51]

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[47] Ibid, p. 3.

[48] Ibid, p. 4.

[49] Ibid, p. 3.

[50] Ibid, p. 4.

The Amendment as Proposed:

Section 73.1217 Broadcast Hoaxes.

No licensee of any broadcast station shall broadcast information or other material it knows to be false if it is foreseeable that broadcast of the information does in fact directly cause substantial harm.

NOTE 1:

For the purposes of this rule, "public harm" is immediate, substantial and actual damage to the health and safety of the general public or to property, or substantial diversion of law enforcement or other public safety authorities from their duties.

NOTE 2:

The public harm will be deemed foreseeable if the licensee could expect with a significant degree of certainty that public harm would occur. Foreseeability will not be inferred from the warnings or disclaimers associated with the broadcast. Lack of foreseeability may be determined in light of factors such as content of the broadcast or the timing of the broadcast (e.g. April Fool's Day or Halloween).[52]

D: The Comments

Comments were filed regarding the proposed hoax rule by National Public Radio (NPR), CBS,Inc., National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), and the law offices of Haley, Bader & Potts. Reply comments, commentary filed in response to commentors' briefs, were later filed by National Broadcasting Company, Inc. (NBC).[53]

While all of the commentors agreed with the commission's concerns when a station broadcasts seemingly factual information that later proves to be a hoax, they disagreed that a specific commission rule was needed to regulate such broadcasts.[54] The commentors presented four main arguments against the rule as well as offering a number of individual concerns regarding the proposed rule.

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[51] Ibid, p.4.

[52] Ibid.p. 4-5.

[53] See MM docket 91-314.

First, the commentors questioned the need for the rule, considering that harmful hoaxes were rare and isolated cases.[55] Noting that the commission's proposal referred to only two hoax cases (KROQ and WALE) and the Walton license revocation, such a rule would represent the very "regulatory overkill" the commission sought to eliminate in its Fourth Underbrush Order. Because the number of hoaxes cited (three) was insignificant in comparison with the "hundreds of thousands of hours of programming broadcast each week on the nation's radio and television stations,"[56] the rule would seem unnecessary.

Second, the commentors cited the court system as the proper arena for dealing with hoax cases. Suggesting there are "alternative, non-FCC remedies for wrongful activity of the sort at issue in those limited circumstances in which the speech may not be subject to First Amendment protection,"[57] the National

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[54] See In re Amendment of Part 73 of the Commission's Rules Regarding Broadcast Hoaxes, MM Docket No. 91-314: COMMENTS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS, p. 1; COMMENTS OF NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO, p. 1; COMMENTS OF CBS, INC., p. 1 ; COMMENTS OF HALEY, BADER & POTTS, p. 2; REPLY COMMENTS BY NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC., p. 1.

[55] See Haley, Bader & Potts, p. 4.

[56] See Haley, Bader & Potts, p. 3.

[57] See NAB, p. 1-2.

Association of Broadcasters argued that the commission's Fourth Underbrush Order seemed adequate for most hoaxes. In addition, the commentors noted that the courts have identified certain types of speech that are not afforded First Amendment protection, including incitement and foreseeability of harm.[58]

In addition, the FCC could still rely on its rules prohibiting news staging, distortion or falsification of news events, and broadcast of false distress signals, as well as its general rule obligating licensees to broadcast in the public interest to regulate hoaxes.[59]

Commentors also suggested that the infrequency of hoaxes proves that broadcasters are keenly aware of the legal and regulatory ramifications, and regard the potential damage to the station's relationship with its audience as an even greater deterrent. A broadcast hoax poses significant potential harm to the station's trust of the public it serves and has consequently motivated station management to take swift action when such hoaxes have occurred.[60]

Third, the commentors suggested that such a rule would impose an unnecessary "chilling effect" on the content of broadcast programming, particularly because all dramatization would be implicated by this rule. Fiction, by its very nature, is fictitious and false.[61] In addition, the rule would impose an undue burden on broadcasters to categorize dramatic programming and to screen all programming for potential violation of the questions of harm, foreseeability and substantial liability as outlined in the rule. This would not only require broadcasters to have a complete and full knowledge of the measurements of these questions, but would also require broadcasters to consider the implications of their programming content "on the average versus the sensitive person."[62] To the commentors, this seemed excessive government action. "For the Commission to become involved in, or to require the broadcaster to perform, program content evaluation of this kind, seems to us to exceed the bounds of permissible government intrusion into the regulation of speech."[63]

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[58] See Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444, 447 (1969); Weirum v. RKO General, Inc., 15 Cal.3d 40, 539 P.2d 36 (1975). In Weirum, the Supreme Court upheld a jury verdict against a radio station, finding that a contest negligently caused listeners to drive recklessly, resulting in a motorist's death. The station repeated encouraged listeners to speed to announced locations, which was found to be encouraging listeners to act in a inherently dangerous manner.

[59] See Letter to Radio Station KROQ-FM; Walton Broadcasting; and Emmis Broadcasting.

[60] See NBC, p. 3-4;CBS, p.3-4.

Finally, the commentors pointed to the overbroad and vague terminology used in the proposal that made it nearly impossible to craft a rule that does not impose a chilling effect on creative programming. The lack of definitions regarding the comparative terms "substantial public harm," "widespread harm," "false information," and "foreseeable public harm" clearly make the proposed rule overbroad and vague.[64] In the absence of clear distinctness of these terms, the rule is too subjective and broad to pass constitutional questions of appropriateness. The vagueness of the rule also effects undue restraint on the broadcast medium by potentially including virtually all types of programming.[65]

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[61] see NPR, p. 1-4. NPR identifies no fewer than six regular programs produced by the organization, "All Things Considered," "Morning Edition," "Performance Today," "Car Talk," "The Bob and Bill Show," and "Crossroads," which account for more than 100 hours of programming per week. "On occasion, these programs contain segments designed to be dramatic, humorous, or satirical which, if done convincingly, could mislead the public into believing that the material is true or accurate," (see p. 2).

[62] Haley, Bader & Potts, p. 8.

[63] Haley, Bader & Potts, p. 8. See also, NAB at p. 2. NAB questions the "appropriateness" of the commission's proposed hoax rule given that broadcasting would be the only medium regulated. Similar activity by a cable system operator apparently would not be regulated. NAB suggests this places undue First Amendment restraint on the broadcasting medium.

Commentators made a number of recommendations to the commission ranging from complete abandonment of the proposed hoax amendment to specific suggestions for narrowing the scope of the regulation if it was adopted.[66] While all applauded the FCC's efforts to address concerns of harmful broadcast hoaxes, they also saw serious encroachment on freedom of speech and unnecessary regulatory overkill imbedded in the proposed rule. Commentors suggested that if the rule were adopted it should be narrowed to exclude all fictional and dramatized programming,[67] and specifically concern only those broadcasts that involved false reporting of crimes or catastrophes,[68] and encompassed foreseeability of actual substantial harm by the licensee.[69]

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[64] See NAB, p. 2-5; NPR, p 4-5; NBC, p. 6-8; Haley, Bader & Potts, p. 6-9.

[65] See NBC, p. 4-8; Haley, Bader & Potts, p. 4-9; NAB, p. 2-4; NPR, p. 4-5.

[66] See NPR, p. 3-5; NAB, p. 2-6; Haley, Bader & Potts, p. 3-12; NBC, p. 2-10; CBS, p. 2-6.

[67] See CBS, p. 5; NPR, p. 4; NBC, p.6.

[68] See CBS, p.5; NPR, p.4.

E: The Adopted Anti-Hoax Amendment

Although it acknowledged that none of the comments filed supported approval of the anti-hoax amendment, the commission adopted a revised amendment on May 14, 1992. The commission addressed the specific concerns of the commentors as well as the overall opinion that such an amendment was not necessary because of the infrequency of hoaxes. "We believe that this regulation is needed to contend with and deter serious hoaxes that pose a substantial threat to the public safety and welfare. A rule will give us greater enforcement flexibility to deal with a range of monetary fines."[70]

The commission narrowed the scope of regulation to programming that includes the reporting of a false crime or catastrophe. The commission said this sufficiently narrowed the scope of the rule to effectively regulate (and presumably deter) the types of broadcast hoaxes that prompted the commission's action in the first place.[71]

The commission also said the narrow scope of the amendment addressed the commentors' concerns of encroachment on First Amendment rights. The commission noted that in Sable Communications the Supreme Court recognized the government's right to regulate speech when the regulation was narrowly tailored to support a "compelling" government interest and was "the least restrictive means" of furthering that interest.[72] The commission believed the hoax rule would meet this constitutional requirement because it was narrowly tailored to impose regulation only on broadcasts involving the false report of a crime or catastrophe when the licensee knows the report is false and can foresee substantial public harm.[73]

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[69] See CBS, p. 4.

[70] Report and Order, In re amendment of Part 73 Regarding Broadcast Hoaxes, 7 FCC Rcd 4106, (1992).

[71] Ibid, p.4, note 14.

The commission also cited the court's willingness to allow regulation of speech that "threatens to cause imminent lawless action," including Schenck, (shouting "fire" in a crowded theatre and causing panic); Brandenburg, (inciting or producing imminent lawless action); and Irving, (false threat of hijacking).[74] The commission further pointed out the First Amendment does not preclude civil liability for broadcasts that create a foreseeable risk of personal injury,[75]

In addressing the question of licensee's knowledge of the hoax, the commission stated that in "order to incur liability, a licensee must have known that the broadcast concerning a crime or catastrophe was false."[76] In addition, the commission has well established that a licensee is responsible for the actions of its employees and that immediate remedial and disciplinary action does not necessarily relieve a licensee of castigation.[77]

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[72] Sable Communications of California, Inc. v. FCC, 492 U.S. 115 (1989).

[73] Ibid, p. 5. In note 19, the commission points out that the amendment is further narrowly defined as to not include fictional and dramatic programming when accompanied by a disclaimer, because such programming would not constitute foreseeable harm.

[74] See Schenck v. United States, 249 U.S. 48,57 (1919); Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969); United States v. Irving, 509 F.2d 1325 (5th Cir. 1975).

[75] See Weirum v. RKO General, Inc., 15 Cal 3d 40, 123 Cal Rptr. 468 (1975); Olivia N. v. NBC, 126 Cal. App. 3d 488, 178 Cal. Rptr. 888 (1981).

Finally, the commission addressed commentors' concerns regarding the foreseeability of substantial public harm. To be actionable, public harm "will be deemed foreseeable if the licensee could expect with a significant degree of certainty that substantial harm would occur...presume(ing) that the public will behave in a rational manner."[78] This "foreseeability test" is included to avoid the chilling effect on broadcasting content and to not hold broadcasters accountable for unreasonable behavior by the public.

The commission concluded that commentors' concerns about the culpability of all fictional or dramatized programming, which is false by nature, was unwarranted given the narrow scope of the term "false" in the rule. Programming that would meet the criteria of the rule but was accompanied by a disclaimer would not meet the "foreseeability" standard and therefore would not be punishable. However, the commission was quick to point out that this did not require all fictional programming to be accompanied by a disclaimer, just that which otherwise would meet all elements of the rule.[79]

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[76] Report and Order, p. 6.

[77] See Empire Broadcasting, and Letter to WALE-AM.

[78] Report and Order, p. 7.

[79] Ibid, p. 7-8.

The Adopted Hoax Amendment:

Part 73 of Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations is amended as follow:

Section 73.1217 Broadcast Hoaxes.

No licensee or permittee of any broadcast station shall broadcast false information concerning a crime or catastrophe if (a) the licensee knows this information is false, (b) it is foreseeable that broadcast of the information will cause substantial public harm, and (c)broadcast of the information does in fact directly cause substantial public harm. Any programming accompanied by a disclaimer will be presumed not to pose foreseeable harm if the disclaimer clearly characterizes the program as a fiction and is presented in a way that is reasonable under the circumstances.

NOTE 1:
For purposes of this rule, "public harm" must begin immediately, and cause direct and actual damage to property or to the health or safety of the general public, or the diversion of law enforcement of other public health and safety authorities from duties. The public harm will be deemed foreseeable if the licensees could expect with a significant degree of certainty that public harm would occur. A "crime" is any act or omission that makes the offender subject to criminal punishment by law. A "catastrophe" is a disaster or imminent disaster involving violent or sudden event affecting the public.[80]

F. Conclusion

The FCC's adoption of the anti-hoax amendment marks a clear intent to reinstate some policy rules governing the content of broadcasting. Reversing the trend of the Reagan-era deregulation, the FCC explained that such a policy rule was needed because broadcasters appeared unable, or unwilling, to police their own programming.

By eliminating much of its regulatory enforcement powers in the 1980s, the FCC found it had effectively "tied its hands" when it came to many broadcast hoaxes that did fall into the categories of existing policy. However, their potentially dangerous content necessitated regulation, forcing the FCC to institute a hoax-specific rule.

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[80] Ibid, Appendix A, p. i.

While all of the commentors argued that no specific hoax rule was necessary because of the infrequency of potentially dangerous hoaxes, it was apparent that FCC rules that were in place were not deterrents for broadcasters. For instance, although the FCC had indeed relaxed many of its content regulation in 1985, the commission left intact rules governing falsification of news, news staging, and improper use of the Emergency Broadcasting System warning signal. However, these firmly entrenched regulations did not stop the potentially dangerous hoaxes perpetuated by KROQ-FM, KSHE-FM or WALE-AM. KROQ's false murder confession was supported for 10 months and ended only when a local news reporter exposed the hoax. The situation exhibited clear falsification of news, and the disc jockey's willingness to allow the prank to continue for nearly a year also exhibited a lack of broadcasting in the public's interest.

The fake nuclear war attack broadcast by WALE broke the FCC's existing regulation prohibiting false broadcasting of the EBS signal. Although the broadcast was later found to be the sole action of its disc jockey, the station did not broadcast a disclaimer and apology for more than four hours. The announcer and the station's actions again seem to point to a blatant disregard for FCC policies, and more importantly, for the public's safety in general. Consequently, it would seem that such an amendment was justified because broadcasters, at least those in these particular cases, are prone to ignore FCC policy rules when it is perceived that regulatory action is rare. It is also possible that FCC rules that were applicable to broadcast hoaxes were largely ignored because the only levels of discipline were admonishment or revocation of license. Broadcasters were realistic in believing that most hoaxes would receive the lesser penalty of admonishment, a relatively minor punishment.

Although the proposed amendment is broad in scope, the revised version pertains only to hoaxes that contain false broadcasts of crime or catastrophe, which demonstrates that the commentors' concerns were taken into consideration when drafting the final rule. While the overbroad nature of the proposed rule had been a major concern for all commentors, it is clear that the FCC did listen to these concerns when adopting the narrowly defined rule. Although none of the commentors supported adoption of the amendment, there did seem to be a feeling that a rule regulating false broadcast of crimes and catastrophes could be tolerated.

The FCC's amendment adoption process, as seen with the anti-hoax amendment, combines the regulatory power of the commission with the advisement input from the very broadcasters who will be most affected by the commission's regulation. The process clearly takes steps to lessen the adversarial relationship between the FCC and broadcasters.

Although the FCC took measures to define terms such as "substantial public harm," "foreseeable" and "crime" a degree of ambiguity still exists in the adopted amendment. This seems to indicate that the commission will have to apply these standards case-by-case, and again cast doubts on the overall effectiveness and necessity of the amendment as a deterrent to broadcast hoaxes.

While, no cases have been prosecuted under this new anti-hoax policy rule, it remains to be seen whether the rule will ever be challenged on First Amendment grounds. Also of interest is whether the rule's intent of broadening the commission's power of regulation by including the assessment of fines will actually serve as a deterrent. In these competitive times, broadcasters are more daring in their programming decisions and often push the boundaries in the pursuit of greater audiences. While this amendment lessens, if not effectively eliminates altogether, the possibility of license revocation as the result of a hoax, the true deterrence value of the rule is questionable. A national survey of radio station managers in the fall of 1994 will gauge the level of importance, and interest, that radio stations have placed on the hoax amendment.

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Newspaper Subscribing and Community Integration:

The Role of Ties to Local Church Communities

by

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Newspaper Subscribing and Community Integration:
The Role of Ties to Local Church Communities

Beginning with the seminal work of Robert Park, newspapers have been viewed as an important mechanism for integrating people into the political, cultural and social life of a community.[1] Picking up on the close relationship between newspaper readership and membership in organizations that Park observed, Merton theorized that participation in and identification with voluntary organizations such as secret societies, fraternal organizations and service clubs would be positively correlated with newspaper use.[2]

Building on work by Park[3] and Janowitz[4] showing that newspaper use is related to ties to a local church, many media studies cast within the community ties framework as well as less theoretical works include either church membership[5] or worship attendance[6] as measures of community integration. These studies indicate that both measures are positively correlated with reading a newspaper. Because newspaper readership and newspaper subscribing are, themselves, highly correlated, the measures are also positively correlated with subscribing.[7]

Using church membership and worship attendance as independent variables to help explain newspaper subscribing obviously has face, construct and predictive validity. However, such use rests on the implicit assumption that membership in a church is, from a community integration standpoint, the functional equivalent of membership in any other organization. That assumption gains credence from the many studies that show positive, and often statistically significant positive correlations between church ties and similar participatory ties to other voluntary associations.[8]

If church ties are simply the functional equivalent of other participatory ties, we might expect that:

> **Hypothesis 1**: Various measures of participation and integration into a church used individually and collectively as a composite measure of church ties, as well as having social motives for church membership, will be positively correlated with subscribing to all newspapers and to multiple local newspapers. These relationships will hold true for the population as a whole and within all religious communities, regardless of their beliefs.

However, one might plausibly argue that ties to a church are not the same as ties to other voluntary organizations. Churches are, first and foremost, ideological organizations committed to their own plausibility structures. Belonging to a church implies accepting a particular religious worldview which then becomes normative for members.[9]

Stamm and Weis' decision to include subscribing to a church publication and activity on behalf of issues important to the church as variables in their study of the relationship between church ties and newspaper subscribing suggests they recognize both the importance of the messages people may receive through church channels and of commitment to church teachings.[10] While their work indicates that affective, participatory and ideological ties to a Catholic parish and to the broader church are positively correlated with subscribing to the local city newspaper, there is no way to tell from their work whether the same thing is true in all Christian traditions. Indeed, there is reason to believe both participatory and ideological ties may sometimes be negatively correlated with newspaper subscribing.

Catholic and Mainline Protestant teachings encourage social awareness and activity on behalf of both church members and non-members; people committed to these traditions are very likely to be active in both politics and community service.[11] This activity represents the kind of community integration assumed in the community ties literature. Therefore, activity in these churches should be related to newspaper use.

In contrast to the universalist orientation of Catholic and Mainline churches, conservative Protestantism teaches a more dualistic worldview which encourages withdrawal from the world and its temptations.[12] Although the relationship between church membership and political activity has changed somewhat as a result of recent efforts to mobilize conservative Christians on behalf of morality issues, conservative Protestants have traditionally been less integrated into the broader community and less politically active than Mainline Protestants and Catholics.[13]

But even if conservative Christians have become more active in the political arena, their attitude toward the mass media may not have changed. Belief in Biblical inerrancy combined with a dispensational understanding of history may combine in a way that encourages use of religious sources of political information and discourages use of secular sources.

In a study designed to determine if conservative Christians shun the television entertainment programs their religious leaders criticize for their sexual content, Roberts noted in passing that his data showed no differences in newspaper use between conservative Christians and more liberal ones.[14] More recently Loges and Ball-Rokeach reported no differences in media use among Jews, Catholics and Protestants.[15] However, Roberts failed to control for commitment to one's faith while Loges and Ball-Rokeach combined quite different theological traditions into a generic Protestant category. In contrast to those studies, other research clearly suggests that committed, conservative Protestants are less likely to use daily newspapers than are equally committed religious liberals.

McFarland and Warren found that devout Fundamentalists expressed greater desire to read pro-fundamentalist articles than anti-fundamentalist ones;[16] Schultze notes that Evangelicals have a "love-hate relationship with the mass media, which to them, represents "a marvelous technology" to use in bringing others to Christ, but also "an apostate culture of despair" to be avoided lest it lead them astray.[17]

Consistent with those findings, work by Buddenbaum shows that regardless of religious orientation, inactive church members are more likely to rely on the mass media for making political decisions than are active church members; however, for each level of activity, religious liberals are more likely than religious conservatives to use the mass media for political information.[18]

Taken together, these studies suggest that the relationship between church ties and newspaper use may depend on the theology promoted within a religious tradition. Therefore, we might suspect that:

Hypothesis 2: Participatory, social and ideological ties, including use of religious publications, will be positively correlated with newspaper subscribing for Catholics and Mainline Protestants, but negatively correlated for more conservative Protestants. In the general population, the direction of the relationship will depend on the kind of Christianity that is most prevalent in a community.

To test these two hypotheses, this study uses 1992 survey data collected in Middletown. While Middletown is not the typical town imagined by the Lynds,[19] the setting has certain advantages. Mainline Protestantism is the dominant religion, but there are enough members of other Christian traditions to allow for meaningful analysis. And, unlike most cities, Middletown has two daily newspapers; although they are sister publications, each has its own identity. Therefore, relationships between participatory and ideological ties and subscribing to each newspaper and to both local newspapers can be examined for the population as a whole and within each of five Christian traditions.

Methodology

Data for this study come from a telephone survey of Middletown (Muncie, Indiana) residents 18 and older conducted during the three weeks prior to the 1992 presidential election. Using a random number generator, phone numbers were selected from among all eligible exchanges in the Muncie SMA. The 987 residents who responded represent 52 percent of the eligible phone numbers contacted.

Subscribing was determined by asking respondents whether they subscribe to the morning Star and to the Evening Press. Answers to the two questions were used individually; they were also combined into a simple additive scale to determine total local newspaper subscribing.

As independent variables, this study examines participatory, social and ideological ties to a Christian tradition. Together, these measures tap both the behavioral and belief aspects of religiosity. The relationships between the three kinds of ties and subscribing were examined for the population as a whole and for each of five Christian traditions.

Questions asking respondents if they identify with a local church and, if so, which local church or synagogue they attend most often were used to place respondents within one of five Christian traditions. For the most part, placement was done along denominational lines, but some individual congregations were placed in a different category because of the congregation's distinctive characteristics. Thus, the groupings approximate distinctive Christian theologies.

Traditions used in this study include: Pentecostal (orthodox/fundamentalist, charismatic - Assembly of God, Apostolic, Church of God-Mountain Assembly, Church of God Full Gospel, Church of God in Christ, FourSquare Gospel, Full Gospel, Pentecostal and some independent congregations); Fundamentalist (orthodox/fundamentalist, not charismatic - Church of Christ in Christian Union, Nazarene, Seventh-day Adventist, Church of Christ, Church of God, Church of God-Anderson, Independent, National, Separate and United Baptist and some individual congregations); Evangelical (orthodox/conservative, born again, may or may not be charismatic depending on denomination/congregation - Southern Baptist, Bible Holiness, several Brethren congregations, Presbyterian-PCA, non-denominational and some individual congregations); Mainline (not orthodox/moderate to liberal, churches are not charismatic and do not emphasize being born again - African Methodist Episcopal, American Baptist, Christian Science, Church of Christ-Independent, Christian-Disciples of Christ, Lutheran-ELCA, Presbyterian-USA, Unitarian Universalist, United Methodist); Roman Catholic (not orthodox/conservative, church is not charismatic and does not emphasize being born again, but there is a Catholic charismatic sub-culture within Middletown parishes).

Because of their small numbers, respondents adhering to non-Christian beliefs were included in the analyses of the population as a whole, but were excluded from further analysis. Those with no religion were included only in the analyses of the population as a whole.

To assess **participatory ties**, individual questions asking respondents how often they attend worship, how active they are in the church and what role they have in the congregation were combined into a single measure of church ties (Cronbach's alpha = .85). Possible responses for the attendance question ranged from "never" to "at least once a week." Response categories for the activity question ranged from "not at all active" to "very active." Possible roles were "not a member," "not really a part of the church," "just an average member," "active but not a leader," and "church leader." These three questions were also used individually to assess the relationship between newspaper subscribing and worship attendance, church activity and the role of members within their congregation.

Social ties to the congregation were measured with questions asking respondents what proportion of their friends are members of the same church and how strongly they agree or disagree that they attend church primarily because they enjoy seeing people they know.

Four measures of **ideological ties** to the church and to the religious tradition it represents were included in this study. These measures include salience, Christian orthodoxy, whether or not the respondent is born again and whether being charismatic or speaking in tongues is an important part of the respondent's religion.

Salience taps an affective component of religiosity, but it also assesses commitment to one's beliefs. This measure combined responses to a question asking, "How important is your religion to you?" with a likert item asking for agreement/disagreement with the statement, "My whole approach to life is based on my religion" (Cronbach's alpha = .7)

Orthodoxy was measured with a scale combining responses to likert items positing Biblical inerrancy, the reality of miracles and Jesus Christ's imminent return to earth (Cronbach's alpha = .8). Christian orthodoxy, being born again and being charismatic are all associated more closely with conservative Protestantism than with Mainline Protestantism or Catholicism. Therefore, responses to them were interpreted in the context of particular religious traditions.

Because religious publications promote a particular religiously-inspired worldview, use of religious publications was also considered to represent an ideological tie. However, because reading is a behavior, that may in part represent a way of feeling close to the church or to church members, use may also be a participatory or social tie to the local church and to a religious tradition.

In this study, use was determined by combining responses to questions asking respondents whether they read religious publications "a lot," "some," "a little" or "not at all," and whether they use them "a lot," "some," "a little" or "not at all" for political information.

Findings

Findings based on this random sample of 987 Middletown households offer some support for both hypotheses, although the evidence tends to favor the hypothesis that participatory and ideological ties to a church are related to newspaper subscribing only for Catholics and Mainline Protestants.

For the population as a whole, individual participatory ties are positively correlated with subscribing to each of the newspaper and with subscribing to both of them. These findings support Hypothesis 1. However, support is limited by the fact that only a few of the relationships achieve statistical significance; those that do differ by newspaper. Regular worship attendance is significantly and positively correlated with subscribing to the Press; church activity is significantly and positively correlated with subscribing to the Star. Perhaps reflecting the characteristics of subscribers to each individual paper, both worship attendance and church activity are significantly and positively correlated with subscribing to both newspapers. (Table 1)

Support for Hypothesis 1 is further limited by the fact that the composite measure of church ties is only tenuously related to subscribing to the Press and to both newspapers. At the same time, it is significantly but negatively related to subscribing to the Star. (Table 1)

Similarly, the measures of social ties to a local congregation support the hypothesis only in the case of subscribing to the morning paper. While having many church friends and attending church primarily to see people are significantly and positively related to subscribing to the Star, the opposite is true for subscribing to the Press and to both newspapers. (Table 1)

As predicted by Hypothesis 2, subscribing behavior varies by religious tradition. Subscribing to each individual newspapers and to both newspapers is highest among Mainline Protestants, who make up almost half of the population. It is lower for conservative Protestants. Among them, Pentecostals are almost as likely as Mainline Protestants to subscribe to the Press, but they are the least likely of all groups to subscribe to the Star. Non-Christians, followed by Evangelicals and other Fundamentalists, are least likely to subscribe to the Press. Evangelicals are also the least likely to subscribe to both papers. (Table 2)

Whereas analyzing the survey data for the population as a whole tends to support Hypothesis 1, analyzing the data by Christian tradition refutes Hypothesis 1 and tends to support Hypothesis 2. Both the individual and composite measures of participatory ties are positively correlated with subscribing to each individual newspaper and to both newspapers for Catholics; for Mainline Protestants, all except the relationship between the composite measure and subscribing to the Star are positively related to subscribing. (Table 3)

While the correlations are generally weaker and the evidence is more mixed, the overall pattern for the conservative traditions suggests it is those who are least tightly tied to their church who are most likely to subscribe to a newspaper. Pentecostals who attend church regularly are significantly more likely than infrequent attenders to subscribe to either the Star or the Press, but subscribing to each individual newspaper and to both papers is also higher among those who are inactive in the church. The same appears true for Evangelicals. For the Fundamentalists, however, having weak ties to the church is related to subscribing to the Press and to both newspapers. Having strong church ties and attending worship services regularly, but otherwise being relatively inactive are significantly correlated with subscribing to the Star. (Table 3)

An examination of the social measures further supports the impression that among conservatives, at least, weak ties to the church are related to newspaper subscribing. In general, having few church friends but attending church to see other people is related to subscribing for Pentecostals, other Fundamentalists and for Evangelicals. Catholic and Mainline subscribers tend to have many church friends. However, going to church to see other people is related to subscribing only for Catholic subscribers to the Star.
(Table 3)

For the population as a whole, those who score low on the orthodoxy scale and who do not describe themselves as charismatic or born again are more likely than others to subscribe to either or both papers. Although only a few relationships achieve statistical significance, the pattern offers additional support to Hypothesis 2 which predicted that for the population as a whole, the relationship between subscribing and the ideological measures would parallel that of the dominant religious culture. Mainline Protestants and Catholics, together, make up well over half of the population. (Table 2)

Among Mainline Protestants and Catholics, subscribing to either newspaper and to both newspapers is highest among those who consider their religion important and who score low on the orthodoxy scale. While scoring low on the orthodoxy scale reflects acceptance of church teaching for Catholics and Mainline Protestants, it suggests the opposite for conservative Protestarts whose churches preach biblical inerrancy and the imminent second coming.

Evangelicals who consider their religion important and who hold orthodox beliefs are somewhat more likely than other Evangelicals to subscribe to the Press; however, those Evangelicals who consider their religion unimportant and who do not hold orthodox beliefs are significantly more likely to subscribe to the Star and to both papers. The same is true for Pentecostals and other Fundamentalists although for them the relationships are not statistically significant. (Table 3)

Because Mainline Protestant churches differ in their emphasis on the gifts of the spirit and on the importance of being born again and because of the presence of a relatively large Catholic charismatic community within Middletown parishes, the relationships between subscribing behavior and being born again and/or being charismatic may or may not support Hypothesis 2. However, the findings within the conservative Protestant traditions offer additional support for the role of religious ideology in explaining newspaper subscribing.

Among Pentecostals, whose churches are charismatic, it is those members who do not describe themselves as charismatic who are most likely to subscribe to each paper and to both newspapers. In other Fundamentalist churches, which do not emphasize the gifts of the spirit and which usually reject speaking in tongues, describing oneself as charismatic is positively correlated with subscribing to the _Star_ and subscribing to both newspapers. For Evangelicals, whose churches emphasize the importance of being born again, those who are not born again are more likely than other Evangelicals to subscribe to the _Star_ and to both newspapers. (Table 3)

Additional support for Hypothesis 2 also comes from the significant, positive correlation between using religious publications and subscribing to either newspaper and to both papers for the population as a whole and within the Catholic and Mainline Protestant traditions. However, if one assumes that people are most likely to read publications from within their own religious tradition, the findings for conservative Protestants would tend to refute Hypothesis 2. Use of religious publications is also related to subscribing within the conservative Protestant traditions, although the relationship is significant only for Evangelicals and only for the _Star_. (Table 3)

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that for the community as a whole, both participatory ties and ideological ties to a local church are significantly and positively correlated to newspaper subscribing. However, these relationships reflect the preponderance of Mainline Protestants and Catholics in the population.

Contrary to the implicit assumptions of community integration theorists, there is little reason to believe that ties to a church necessarily represent community integration. Nor is there reason to believe that ties to a church will lead equally to subscribing to all newspapers, even within those religious communities where church ties are related to community integration.

For Catholics and Mainline Protestants, regular attendance at worship, being generally active in a local congregation, having a leadership role in it and having many friends in the church are related to subscribing to individual newspapers, and more strongly to subscribing to both local newspapers. For conservative Protestants, the opposite is generally true. Among Pentecostals, other Fundamentalists, and Evangelicals, frequent attendance at worship services is related to subscribing, but so too are low church activity, not being a leader and not having many friends in the church. Among conservative Protestants, going to church to see other people is related to subscribing. That is not true for Mainline Protestants or Catholics.

In contrast to the traditional community ties literature which assumes that both church attendance and newspaper subscribing are marks of integration into a community, these findings suggest that both worship attendance and newspaper subscribing may, in some cases, be indicators of isolation, particularly among conservative Protestants. In those traditions, subscribers are more likely than non-subscribers to say they go to church to see other people, but their participatory and ideological ties to the religious community are quite weak.

While participatory ties to a local congregation may represent community integration for Mainline Protestants and Catholics, ideological ties also appear to have some explanatory power. Within the Catholic and Mainline traditions, those who share their church's teachings are much more likely to subscribe to papers than are those with weak ideological ties. Again, among conservative Protestants the opposite is generally true. Those who do not agree with church teachings are most likely to subscribe.

As expected, subscribing to both newspapers is much more common among Mainline Protestants and Catholics than among Pentecostals and other Fundamentalists. In Middletown approximately two-fifths of all households subscribe to the morning Star and one-fourth subscribe to the Evening Press. Ten percent subscribe to both newspapers. Mainline Protestants and Catholics are significantly more likely to subscribe to the Star and to both papers than are conservative Christians and those with no religious affiliation.

These findings from Middletown indicate that participatory and social ties to a local church do not necessarily lead to newspaper use. In fact, the results suggest that it may be difficult for newspapers to garner subscribers in communities with substantial numbers of conservative Christians. However, the subscribing behavior of Middletown Pentecostals indicates that a newspaper's editorial stance may make a difference.

Although Pentecostals, like other conservative Protestants, are generally less likely to subscribe to the local papers, they are more likely than members of other groups to subscribe to the Press rather than to the Star, which is the dominant paper in the market. This suggests that religious ideology, socioeconomic status, and news content may interact in ways that can either enhance or limit the inclination to subscribe to a particular paper.

Research consistently shows that those with low socioeconomic status are less likely to subscribe to newspapers than those with more education and higher incomes.[20] In Middletown Pentecostals are the least educated and least affluent of the Christian traditions, yet they are as likely to subscribe to the Press as are the more educated and affluent Catholics and Mainline Protestants.

In Middletown the two newspapers are sister publications and part of the Central Newspaper chain which is known for its conservatism. Both papers describe themselves in Editor and Publisher as politically independent, but they are generally conservative in state and national politics. However, the Press has the reputation locally of being more in tune with the working class and more favorable to the labor Democrats, who usually dominate city government.[21]

That the Press appears to be more attractive to Pentecostals than to other Fundamentalists in Middletown, who also are quite low in socioeconomic status, suggests that religious beliefs and media content interact. Knowing both the nature of a newspaper and the participatory and ideological ties of church members may be necessary to understand subscribing behavior.

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Table 1

Religious and Demographic Correlates of Newspaper Subscribing[1]

Correlate	Total	Subscribing Star	Press
Participatory Ties:			
Church Ties	.001	low*	high
Worship Attendance	.086**	high	high*
Church Activity	.099****	high****	high
Role in Church	.063	high	high
Social Ties:			
Church Friends	-.022	many****	few
Attend to See People	-.003	yes	no
Ideological Ties:			
Salience	-.001	high	low
Orthodox Beliefs	-.093**	low*	low
Born Again	no	no	no
Charismatic	no*	no	no
Rel. Pub. Use	.123****	high****	high

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[1] Chi square used as test of significance for *Star* and *Evening Press* and for the relationship between total subscribing and being born again and charismatic. Other correlations are Pearson's r.

*	p < .1
**	p < .05
***	p < .01
****	p < .005
*****	p < .001

Table 2

Newspaper Subscribing by Religious Tradition

Religion	Total Number: 0	1	2	Star: No	Yes	Press: No	Yes
Pentecostal (n=62)	41.9	48.4	9.7	58.1	41.9	74.2	25.8
Fundamentalist (n=130)	38.1	56.1	5.8	56.1	43.9	79.9	20.1
Evangelical (n=58)	27.6	70.7	1.7	44.8	55.2	81.0	19.0
Mainline (n=433)	27.1	55.3	17.6	38.3	61.7	71.1	28.9
Catholic (n=89)	32.6	53.9	13.5	44.9	55.1	74.2	25.8
Non-Christian (n=30)	43.3	46.7	10.0	50.0	50.0	83.3	16.7
No Religion (n=135)	42.3	44.0	13.7	54.9	45.1	73.7	26.3

Total Number: Chi square 40.07 df 11 $p < .001$

Star: Chi square 22.99 df 5 $p < .005$

Press: Chi square 6.79 df 5 p = n.s.

Table 3

Correlates of Newspaper Subscribing in Five Christian Traditions[1]

		Subscribing	
Tradition/Correlate	Total	Star	Press
Pentecostal			
Church Ties	-.116	weak	weak
Worship Attendance	.074	high	high
Church Activity	-.219*	low	low
Role in Church	-.074	low	low
Church Friends	-.269**	few**	few
Attend to See People	.114	yes****	no
Salience	-.040	high	low
Orthodox Beliefs	-.165	no	no
Born Again	no	no	no
Charismatic	no	no	no
Rel. Pub. Use	-.012	high	low
Fundamentalist			
Church Ties	.029	strong	weak
Worship Attendance	.058	high**	low
Church Activity	-.030	low*	low
Role in Church	-.075	low	low
Church Friends	-.068	few**	few
Attend to See People	-.020	no	no
Salience	-.045	high	low
Orthodox Beliefs	.054	yes	no
Born Again	yes	yes	no
Charismatic	yes	yes	no
Rel. Pub. Use	.069	high	high
Evangelical			
Church Ties	-.205	weak	weak
Worship Attendance	-.161	low	low
Church Activity	-.179	low	low
Role in Church	-.112	low	low
Church Friends	-.228*	few	few
Attend to See People	.269**	yes	no
Salience	-.166	low**	high
Orthodox Beliefs	-.262*	no**	yes
Born Again	no	no	yes
Charismatic	no	no	no
Rel. Pub. Use	.114	high***	low

Table 3 (continued)

Tradition/Correlate	Total	Subscribing Star	Press
Mainline			
Church Ties	.027	weak	strong
Worship Attendance	.114**	high	high*
Church Activity	.173****	high**	high**
Role in Church	.185*****	high	high**
Church Friends	.089	many*	many
Attend to See People	-.076	no	no
Salience	.026	high	low
Orthodox Beliefs	-.042	no	no
Born Again	yes	yes	no
Charismatic	yes	no	yes
Rel. Pub. Use	.139***	high***	high
Roman Catholic			
Church Ties	.307****	strong*	strong***
Worship Attendance	.295***	high	high*
Church Activity	.320****	high****	high
Role in Church	.140	high	high
Church Friends	.194*	many	many
Attend to See People	-.054	yes	no
Salience	.278**	high	high
Orthodox Beliefs	-.025	yes	no
Born Again	yes	yes	no
Charismatic	yes	no	no
Rel. Pub. Use	.476*****	high***	high****

[1] Chi square used as test of significance for Star and Evening Press and for the relationship between total subscribing and being born again and charismatic. Other correlations are Pearson's r.

*	p < .1
**	p < .05
***	p < .01
****	p < .005
*****	p < .001

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NEWSROOM VIEWS ABOUT CONSULTANTS IN LOCAL TV:

THE EFFECT OF WORK ROLES AND SOCIALIZATION

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NEWSROOM VIEWS ABOUT CONSULTANTS IN LOCAL TV: THE EFFECT OF WORK ROLES AND SOCIALIZATION

The impact of news consultants in local television most visibly surfaces with the style and appearance of news. Thus, consultants influence the pace of a newscast, the hairstyles of the anchors, and the design of the studio set. But, consultants also have a more subtle influence on the content of local television news. They recommend which kinds of stories should become part of the news mix. They shape the emphasis of stories within that mix. And, they guide newsworkers about how those stories should be presented.

As local news programs increasingly have become profit centers for television stations, the need for consultants also has increased. Regardless of their degree of pervasiveness in local TV news, the actual impact of consultants depends on newsroom acceptance of their recommendations. Oddly, this important factor shaping the face of local TV news rarely has been studied (Peale & Harmon, 1991).

The purpose of this paper is to compare two theories about the acceptance of consultants' recommendations in local television news, both arguing that recommendations are not uniformly accepted by all TV newsworkers. The first theory suggests that views are related to a person's role in a news organization. Thus, news directors would see consultants as essential to their jobs, because news directors are accountable for the ratings (and financial success) of their shows. In contrast, producers and assignment editors would bear the brunt of consultants' recommendations, and would likely harbor some negative feelings toward consultants.

The second theory argues that although work roles partially account for differences in newsroom views, these views are linked to a more complex explanation. In particular, the background and work experience of a producer, assignment editor, or news director should be at least as important as the work role. Thus, somebody with a great deal of experience as a reporter would view consultants less favorably, while individuals who reached the newsroom after working in sales or technical positions would see consultants more favorably. Further, as a person becomes more experienced and socialized in a work role, that person should maintain stronger opinions about that role's core beliefs.

Data for this study come from a survey of producers, assignment editors, and news directors working in local television news departments in one Midwest state. Exploration of journalists' views is facilitated by a comparison of opinions by work roles and by cluster analysis, a procedure that can consider common orientations patterns across a set of survey items.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

The roots of news consulting lie in the broader context of commercial media research. The first consulting firms were formed in the early 1960s, but rather than working with news, these firms helped broadcasters with entertainment programming (Bowen, 1990; R. Powers, 1977). As the profitability of local news increased in the late 1960s, consultants moved into that area. Two firms--McHugh & Hoffman and Frank Magid Associates--performed the bulk of news consulting and their businesses expanded rapidly through the 1970s. Because demand for news consulting was so great, in 1976 a group of Magid employees defected and formed a competing company, Audience Research & Development (Audience Research & Development, 1983).

Most affiliate television stations now enlist the services of audience researchers or news consultants (Frankola, 1990; Jacobs, 1990). Further, nearly one-half of the 650 U.S. television news departments have contracts with Magid, AR&D, or McHugh & Hoffman at costs that can range from $4,000 to $8,000 per month (William Taylor, personal communication, July 26, 1993). Magid representatives consult for approximately 125 local newsrooms (Frank Magid, personal communication, June 15, 1993). Audience Research & Development has slightly more than 100 clients (Audience Research & Development, 1993). McHugh & Hoffman has a clientele of approximately 45 newsrooms (John Bowen, personal communication, July 5, 1993). A dozen smaller "boutique" consultants serve 200 additional television stations (Butler, 1985).

The main purpose of news consultants is to enhance the ratings and competitiveness of news operations. Consultants thus focus their efforts on segmenting audiences and identifying their preferences for content and style. In particular, consultants focus on middle-class and lower-class preferences because these viewers tend to comprise the largest audience sectors (McHugh & Hoffman, 1990). Audience reactions to news programs usually are assessed through surveys and focus groups, and clients are presented with a report of recommendations. Frequently, recommendations center on aesthetic features, such as appearance of the studio set or the personal appeal of news anchors (Waters, 1980). News departments that trail in a local market's ratings are most likely to hire a consulting firm or change the firm they retain (Townley, 1974). The actual effectiveness of consultants' recommendations has been questioned, however (Prisuta, 1979).

Considerable evidence shows that consultants have an impact not only stylistic elements, but on news elements as well (R. Powers, 1977). Further, these recommendations for specific news elements have changed over time as they follow social trends. For example, in the 1970s, consultants began to urge a deemphasis of local political coverage (Lelyveld, 1975). In 1979, consultants emphasized "news you can use," and a survey of news managers found that "more consumer reports" was the second most common consultant recommendation (Davis & Zimmerman, 1979). More recently, an examination of reports by McHugh & Hoffman and by AR&D also found lists of content-related recommendations for their clients. In each case, these recommendations were developed by surveying viewers about their news preferences. Both firms rated weather and crime news most highly, with politics and entertainment news near the bottom of their topic preference lists.[1]

Additional evidence of consultant-generated news agendas appear in content studies (Hardman, 1990; Peale & Harmon, 1991; Maier, 1986). One point these studies make is that television stations in different markets--but using the same consulting firm--tend to broadcast similar types of news stories. This suggests that recommendations are not always drawn from locally conducted research.

Most consultants deny their impact on journalistic aspects of news (R. Powers, 1977). Their argument, however, tends to be a technical one. That is, although consultants make content related recommendations, they do not become involved in day-to-day news decisions, and they visit newsrooms only occasionally. Nonetheless, their recommendations about content categories tend to be followed in the newsroom. Beyond categories of news, consultants may influence editorial decisions through an indirect socialization process. Through presentations, workshops, and group encounters in the newsroom, consultants cultivate and instill professional norms and beliefs (Allen, 1992; Jacobs, 1990). In some instances, newsworkers are even invited to a consultant's headquarters for extended orientation sessions (Schulberg, 1994), what some call "getting Magid-ized" .

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[1] McHugh & Hoffman's complete list of content priorities (most preferred to least preferred) was as follows: weather news; metro events; crime and corruption; national-international news; money-related news; medical breakthroughs; crime prevention; people stories; home and property protection; missing children reports; amusing stories; health news; education; technology; physical fitness; news about things to do; sports; shopping tips; personal finance; career opportunities; entertainment news; parenting news; politics; military news; boating news.

Audience Research & Development's complete list of content priorities was: emergency weather; crime prevention; crime; weather segment; news related to children; environmental news; national-international news; education; breaking news; investigative news; live news; health news; business news; minority affairs; military news; agriculture news; sports; high school sports; entertainment news.

Even though the work of television journalists is shaped by consultants' recommendations, little systematic research has considered the degree of consultants' impact on the news. Related research suggests two possible social forces that could shape journalists' views: organizational work roles and professional socialization. Of all the people in a television newsroom, the people with the clearest view of consultants' recommendations are producers, assignment editors, and news directors, those "news managers" (Smith & Becker, 1989) who ultimately decide which stories will be covered and packaged into newscasts. Among these three groups, a news director is usually the only person on the news staff allowed to see a consultant's confidential recommendations (Davis & Zimmerman, 1979; Garron, 1993; R. Powers, 1977). Producers and assignment editors learn about recommendations second hand, and reporters have very little direct exposure to consultant recommendations.

Although news managers share a common organizational role, the day-to-day responsibilities of assignment editors, producers, and news directors differ. As workers in an "assembly line process" (Bantz, McCorkle, & Baade, 1980), each of these three groups has a distinct responsibility. Assignment editors and producers do not have administrative duties, but nonetheless assume important managerial work roles by guiding newsroom activities toward completion of scheduled newscasts. Assignment editors help connect information gatherers (reporters) with news stories to begin the news production process; producers bring closure by guiding production of stories into daily newscasts.

Through their connections to the daily journalistic effort, assignment editors and producers identify with some of the information gatherers' journalistic ideals about the nature of news, as well as with their news management roles. Thus, from a work roles perspective, producers and assignment editors might feel a tension between journalistic and business considerations and might feel that consultants are meddling in their affairs.

News directors face a different tension in their work. Although news directors make some contributions to daily news decision-making, their primary organizational responsibilities are usually administrative (Wulfemeyer, 1990). A news director's efforts are aimed mainly toward preparing financial budgets, hiring and evaluating personnel, and conducting long-range planning (A. Powers, 1991). A news director also answers to a station's general manager and is accountable if news ratings fail to meet the general manager's expectations (Stone, 1987a). Thus, news directors should see news consultants as beneficial to their organizational role and should have favorable attitudes towards news consultants.

Some empirical support has been found for divisions among newsworkers according to work roles. Newsworkers in administrative positions are more comfortable with business requirements than those who handle information (McCombs & Becker, 1979). They also tend to be more satisfied with their work and more comfortable with business considerations than are reporters (Smith & Becker, 1989). News administrators tend to welcome research, not only to meet content-related requirements for news, but also to increase audience understanding of the news (Robinson & Levy, 1986). And, in contrast to all other newsworkers, news directors tend to accept business-journalistic conflicts as a matter of course. In some cases, news directors even embrace commercial responsibilities in order to become stronger candidates for general manager positions (Allen, 1992; Stone, 1987a).

In contrast, producers and assignment editors have demonstrated negative attitudes toward applying research-based recommendations to news content decisions, favoring their own news values and ideals instead (Robinson & Levy, 1986). To them, "news doctors" personify the business side of journalism because of their use of audience research to make news a more marketable commodity. Because they work in close proximity to reporters, producers and assignment editors tend to harbor similar concerns about consultants' commercial intrusions (Harmon, 1989; Johnson, 1974).

In sum, a work roles perspective argues that a newsworker's position in the news production process will shape views about the impact of consultants. That is, those newsworkers who most benefit from recommendations will have the most positive opinions about consultants. Here, news directors should be more favorable toward consultants than should producers and assignment editors.

Despite the intuitive appeal of the relationship between newsroom work roles and opinions about consultants, the argument is somewhat flawed. All producers, assignment editors, and news directors do not reach their positions through the same career paths. Some have more experience at their jobs, and will be more idealistic or more jaded about their function as journalists. Further, TV news departments vary considerably in working conditions, market pressures, and organizational cultures. For example, 40% of local newsrooms are in small markets (below 100 ADI), where financial budgets permit an average of around 15 employees (Stone, 1993). In these smaller newsrooms, the assumed work roles of news director, producer, and assignment editor may be hypothetical because individuals often function in all three capacities (Furber, 1989). This overlapping of newswork responsibilities is not confined to smaller markets, but is increasingly accepted in markets above the 100 ADI level because of budgetary restraints and downsizing (Allen, 1993a).

In another vein, producers, assignment editors, and news directors have different and often circuitous career tracks. In general, news managers emerge from the reporting ranks (A. Powers, 1991), even though trade data show that only 25% of news directors were news directors in their previous position (Stone, 1987b). While the majority of news directors have been assistant news directors, assignment editors, or executive producers in past positions, approximately eight percent rise from administrative positions outside the news department (such as advertising sales).

Studies probing the socialization of journalists have further questioned the significance of work roles. In general, a newsworker's journalistic background has been tied more closely to attitudes about a media organization's product than has the person's work role (Berkowitz, 1993). For example, a newsworker more socialized into *journalistic ideals* would feel frustrated by consultants' recommendations for news programming, regardless of that person's role in the news process. Journalistic ideals encompass notions such as objective news values, the watchdog role of the press, and an emphasis on important occurrences. In contrast, a person with greater identification to the *profession of journalism* would take greater pride in the news organization and to journalism as a career. A person of this orientation would also be likely to join one or more professional journalism organizations. Criticizing the news product would thus create dissonance with this boosterish orientation, adding to organizational insecurity by questioning the person's abilities to create a "good" product.

Another element shaping views about consultants is experience in a particular organizational setting. Although television news positions are interchangeable across stations (Bantz, et al., 1980), each organization maintains its own culture. As journalists gain experience within their media organization, they become socialized to unofficial "policy" about procedures, "sacred cows," and organizational norms (Breed, 1955). Newsworkers learn to live within policy expectations, as well as expectations from people and institutions outside the organization (Blumler &

Gurevitch, 1981). Those who do not conform are usually eased out of the organization (Breed, 1955; Tuchman, 1978).

Newsworkers also vary in degree of introspection about their work. Although most newsworkers uphold traditional journalistic news values (Berkowitz, 1993), news values are often mediated by organizational routines and constraints (Bantz, 1985; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). Some newsworkers recognize these organizational influences, but most do not (Tuchman, 1978), and some grow oblivious to potential conflicts between journalistic and business concerns (Allen, 1993b).

In sum, this discussion has argued that news consultants have become an institution within local television news. Consultants have long made an impact on the editorial composition of news content, even though they do not dictate decisions on a day-to-day basis. The extent to which consultants exert influence depends on how they are perceived by news managers. These perceptions are likely to vary, although it is unclear whether these perceptions are linked to a news manager's work role or to individual, organizational, and professional factors. Two research questions follow:

> RQ_1: To what degree are views about consultants linked to work roles?
>
> RQ_2: Are views about consultants more closely related to a person's organizational context and professional experiences?

METHOD

Questionnaire design began by searching an electronic news database for articles about news consultants in local TV. Academic research also was reviewed. Finally, interviews were conducted with a few local television journalists and one news consultant. A list of concepts was drawn from these information resources, and the concepts were operationalized into 22 survey items about consultants in local television news (see appendix for complete question wording).

The questionnaire also included several background items that followed from this study's theoretical notions. These items included:

- Current job title. One theory posed here suggests that views about consultants are linked to a person's work role.
- Journalistic experience. Four items assessed a respondent's experience in (a) various work roles, (b) in television news, (c) in journalism overall, and (d) at the person's station. These items assess overall socialization into journalism and into a specific organizational culture.
- Journalism degree. This measure of professional socialization is related to views about journalistic ideals. Not all working journalists have completed a degree in their field.
- Membership in professional organizations. This item assesses a respondent's feeling of professionalism, which should be linked to views about consultants.

Two additional items asked whether the respondent's station currently used the services of a news consultant and if a consultant had been used in the past three years. The questionnaire took the form of a four-page monarch-size booklet as recommended by Erdos (1983). This format makes the questionnaire appear easier to answer and avoids problems with skipped pages.

The sample was developed by contacting the 12 local television news departments in Iowa for the names of producers, assignment editors, news directors, and other news department management. In all, this produced a list of 19 producers, 10 assignment editors, and 15 news directors.[2] All 44 of these people received questionnaires, so the data represent a census of the state, with market sizes 70, 82, 84, 141, 147, and 200.

Mailings followed recommendations of Erdos (1983) and Dillman (1978), and began with an individually addressed prenotification postcard. Four days later, the questionnaire was mailed to respondents along with a cover letter and stamped return envelope. A reminder postcard was sent to those respondents whose questionnaires had not been received after six days. Finally, a second questionnaire, cover letter, and return envelope were sent to those whose responses had not been received after another eight days. In all, 30 of the questionnaires were received, for a response rate of 68%. Twenty respondents were producers, assignment editors, or managing editors; ten were news directors or assistant news directors. A response rate of this magnitude should be reasonably representative of the group surveyed.

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[2] Some people responding to the survey used different job titles, however, and the self-described title were ultimately used for data analysis. Titles were simplified into these three categories, although a few other job titles were mentioned and some people mentioned multiple job titles. Managing editors were combined with producers; assistant news directors were combined with news directors. However, if a person had multiple job titles, the title most central to this study was used. Thus, a person who was both an assignment editor and producer was considered as a producer. If a person was a news director plus another title (as was the case in smaller markets), that person was considered as a news director. If a person was an assistant news director and another position, then the person was coded as the other position.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis began by testing the theory that views about consultants will be divided along work roles. Because the data were collected to test a theory rather than to describe a population, the 30-person sample size was adequate for the task. To accomplish this, means for the 22 survey items were compared between producers/assignment editors and news directors. The results of this analysis appear in Table 1, which orders survey items from greatest to least difference between groups.

Table 1 about here

Several observations can be made from Table 1. First, news directors generally tended toward moderately positive views of consultants while producers/assignment editors were slightly negative or essentially neutral. Second, t-tests produced statistically significant differences between group means for 6 of the 22 survey items. Third, the items that produced the greatest difference between the two groups concerned the _value_ of consultants to both TV newsworkers and audiences (items 22, 18, 3, 16) and _validity_ of consultants' research-based recommendations (items 7, 4). Finally, both groups showed relative consensus about the impact of consultants on content (items 19, 1, 9, 5, 13), where both groups saw a moderate impact on the shaping of content. Thus, there was some differentiation of views by work roles in regard to the value and validity of consultant recommendations, yet also some agreement that consultants do affect news content. Overall, the differences between groups were not sharply delineated.

The relatively low item means for the producer/assignment editor group merits further examination. Two viable explanations could be considered. One possibility is that these people do not have strong views about consultants because consultants are not closely involved with their work. A second possibility is that a lack of consensus exists among producers and assignment editors (as suggested by the second research question). Cluster analysis was used to provide information about these two possibilities.

Cluster analysis is similar to factor analysis, in that it creates groupings of variables or people from a set of data (see Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984 for a full discussion of the method). Here, responses across the complete set of 22 survey items were compared in order to detect overarching response patterns. Again, the sample was adequate for this task because the purpose was to detect issue orientation patterns: a larger sample would mainly highlight nuances of the main patterns. Using Euclidean distance measures and Ward's Linkage Method, a two-cluster solution was chosen.[3]

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[3] Euclidean distances are a measure of association between two sets of values, here the 22 item means for each of the three clusters. Values represent the square root of the sum of the squared differences between two clusters. Perfect correspondence between clusters would be a distance of zero. Unlike Pearson correlation coefficients, there is no set upper limit and values are affected by the measurement scale used. The two-cluster solution was chosen by an inspection of the cluster dendrogram along with consideration of cluster joining distances.

Table 2 about here

Table 2 presents information about the work role composition of the two clusters. Here, it becomes clear that although work roles account for some opinion differences between the two clusters, other factors are also at play. Cluster 1 is composed of an even mix of news directors and producers/assignment editors. In contrast, cluster 2 is almost completely producers and assignment editors. Thus, while the work role composition of cluster 1 has changed quite a bit, the composition of cluster 2 is nearly the same. Because these clusters have been defined by opinion patterns rather than by work roles, Table 2 suggests that the modest item means for the producer/assignment editor group in Table 1 are the result of a lack of consensus within that work role.

Table 3 about here

Table 3 presents information about the cluster item means. The first thing that stands out in Table 3 is that the mean item responses for each cluster have become greater, especially for cluster 2. Further, the difference (expressed as range) between group means has become greater, and a statistically significant difference was found between 19 of the 22 means. This compares to only seven significant differences in the analysis by work roles. Thus, the cluster analysis grouping was able to draw sharper distinctions in views about news consultants than was the work roles analysis, suggesting that views about consultant recommendations do indeed go beyond work roles.

The qualities of these differences are also important. One sharp difference appeared in terms of the value of consultants (items 22, 18, 16). Here, cluster 1 supported the value of consultants while cluster 2 disputed it. The next most discriminating items concerned journalistic integrity (items 17, 20, 10). Again, cluster 1 supported the work of consultants while cluster 2 believed that consultants undermine the basics of journalism. Several other items show agreement between the two clusters, and these items concern consultants' impact on news content (items 9, 1, 5, 19, 13). In general, respondents felt that consultants have a moderate effect on what becomes the news. This finding is in agreement with the work roles analysis.

Table 4 about here

Another way of understanding the opinion orientations of the two clusters is by sorting item means according to intensity of opinion. Table 4 orders the items according to cluster 1 means, with strongest agreement at the top and strongest disagreement on the bottom. Cluster 1 people see consultants as valuable to the news department (items 18, 16), as helping better serve viewers (items 3, 22, 17), and as basing recommendations on valid research (items 4, 12). Overall, cluster 1 people see that consultants improve the news organization's efforts.

Table 5 about here

Table 5 presents the same kind of information for cluster 2. These people provide a clear contrast with cluster 1. They believe that consultants undermine journalistic ideals (items 19, 20, 14), they question the validity of consultants' recommendations (items 8, 15), and they doubt consultants' overall value to the news department (2, 21, 6, 16). Thus, while cluster 1 people focused on *organizational benefits*, cluster 2 people focused on *journalistic ideals*.

An examination of background information for the two clusters provides support for this interpretation of the cluster orientations. Cluster 1 people--those supportive of consultants--were more likely to belong to a professional journalism organization (57.1% for cluster 1 vs 31.3% for cluster 2) and currently to be using a consultant (78.6% vs 56.3%). Cluster 2 people--those critical of consultants--were more likely to have a journalism degree (87.5.24% for cluster 2 vs 57.1% for cluster 1). No meaningful differences appeared between clusters for market size, years of experience, years with the station, or age.

Another question about backgrounds concerns the differences in opinions about consultants within the same work role. Even though the number of cluster 2 news directors--those critical of consultants--is small (n=3), some contrasts with cluster 1 news directors are quite clear. Cluster 2 news directors were more likely to have a journalism degree (100.0% vs 42.9%), while cluster 1 news directors were more likely to be working in a medium market and using a consultant (71.4% vs 33.3% for both measures).

A further distinction between news directors in the two clusters surfaced in terms of work experience. Cluster 1 news directors had been in their work role longer (mean=4.6 years vs 1.3 years), had more experience in TV news (mean=14.1 years vs 6.7 years), and were older (mean=39.4 years vs 29.7 years). However, there was little difference in how long the two clusters had worked at their current station (mean=6.8 years for cluster 1 vs 4.3 for cluster 2). In sum, cluster 1 news directors had more at stake in their TV news careers and a more seasoned perspective about the value of consultants to their continued success.

The case was somewhat different for producers/assignment editors across clusters (7 in cluster 1, 13 in cluster 2). There was no real difference in terms of having a journalism degree, belonging to in professional organizations, using a consultant, market size, years in TV news, or years in their current position. However, a noticeable difference appeared between the two clusters in terms of overall experience. Cluster 2 people had been journalists longer (mean=11.6 years vs 7.1 years) and they had been at their current stations longer (4.7 years vs 1.9 years). In sum, cluster 2 producers/assignment editors had more exposure to the journalistic impact of news consultants and had become somewhat jaded with what they had observed--they had a greater opportunity to observe the impact of news consultants on one news department.

One question remains about these producers and assignment editors: Are these people split by their more specific work role? A comparison of job title by cluster membership shows that 5 of the 6 assignment editors were in cluster 2, compared to 7 of the 12 producers. In other words, those most closely linked to journalistic decision making and with the most contact with reporters--the assignment editors--were somewhat more likely to hold negative views about the impact of consultants on the news. Producers are more likely to be in regular contact with anchors, people closely aligned with aesthetic elements of "the show." These findings are clearly in line with others in this study.

CONCLUSIONS

This study tested two theories about the acceptance of consultants' recommendations in local TV news. One argued that producers and assignment editors would be clearly split from news directors according to their overarching work roles. Survey data found some support for this notion because news directors were, indeed, generally supportive of news consultants. However, data also found a lack of consensus about consultants among producers and assignment editors.

Cluster analysis then was used to identify two groups of opinion orientations, and each cluster involved a combination of the two work role groups. Thus, views about consultants appear to be formed by more than work role alone. Evidence suggests that those who have the most at stake in the business success of local television news are most supportive of consultants. In contrast, those more strongly tied to journalistic concerns tend to be critical of consultants. In each case, those most deeply steeped in their work roles are the ones most clearly delineated by work roles. Those with less exposure to the demands and ideals of their work roles were more likely to hold opinions counter to more experienced members in those roles. For more experienced news directors, this effect appears as an increased emphasis on organizational benefits; for more experienced producers and assignment editors, the effect is reinforcement of journalistic ideals.

Comments written on survey questionnaires amplify these points. One assignment editor expressed frustrations about the impact of consultants on journalism like this:

> They [consultants] are the reason news shows become so sensational and tabloid. They have helped get us away from our mission as journalists. They're hype over substance. I'll be blunt, I hate them and what they've done to my profession.

A producer provided a contrasting viewpoint, arguing that the ultimate responsibility for consultants' impact lies in the newsroom:

> News consultants bring ideas and input. It is up to the newsroom staff to successfully implement those suggestions that are realistic for the market. Idealism can often be the root of some ideas. The managers (newsroom- not general) must decide what their staff can realistically complete.

Another assignment editor echoed this perspective, stating that "a good news director should use a consultant, not let a consultant use him."

The findings of this study pose an interesting contradiction about the impact of consultants on the news. On the one hand are news directors, those people who receive consultants' recommendations and guide the news department's effort toward implementing those recommendations. For the most part, news directors are supportive of recommendations and become increasingly so with experience in their jobs.

On the other hand are the producers and assignment editors who are given the charge to bring consultants' recommendations into their daily work. There, recommendations come into conflict with producers' and assignment editors' journalistic ideals. Again, these work role beliefs seem to become firmer with experience, but for these people, so does resistance to accepting consultants' recommendations.

One explanation for this conflict lies in consulting style. In many cases, consultants only work with station management, promotion directors, and news directors. One consultant explained that recommendations become "top down" ideas from people in authority at a television station, and in many cases "the younger rank-and-file assume that their managers and consultants are up to all kinds of heinous things" (Eric Braun, Frank Magid Associates, personal communication, March 19, 1994). This interpretation was supported by another consultant, who explained that recommendations most frequently are accepted when a common understanding of the organization's "mission" is shared throughout the newsroom (Larry Rickel, The Broadcast Image Group, personal communication, March 18, 1994).

Future research needs to examine the link between the beliefs of local TV producers/assignment editors/news directors and the news decision behaviors that result from those beliefs. Research should also consider the how this study's findings fit larger market stations, which were not available for this sample.

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APPENDIX: Survey Item Wording

1. Overall, news consultants have very little impact on what is covered in local TV news. (Little impact on content)

2. To be competitive, a news department must use the services of a news consultant. (Must use consultant)

3. A news consultant really serves the purpose of "ombudsman" for a station's viewers, helping a news department understand its audience's interests. (Ombudsman for viewers)

4. Recommendations by news consultants seem to be based on valid audience research. (Recommendations from valid research)

5. News consultants have a great impact on the news by recommending which topics should generally be covered. (Topic recommendations have great impact)

6. It is easier for a producer to do a good job with newscasts if a station uses a news consultant. (Makes producer's job easier)

7. Focus group research used by consultants tends to provide poor guidance for the kinds of stories that should be chosen. (Focus groups provide poor guidance)

8. The advice of news consultants is based more on their work with other stations than on knowledge of a specific market's audience. (Advice mainly from experience)

9. The impact of news consultants on the news is clearly visible in the way that stories are presented. (Clearly impact story presentation)

10. News consultants really work for the general manager rather than for the news department. (Really work for general manager)

11. News consultants tend to complicate the work of a producer. (Complicate producer's job)

12. Recommendations of news consultants seem to be "seat of the pants" ideas. (Recommendations "seat of the pants")

13. News consultants visibly shape the news by the way that some stories are emphasized over others. (Shape news by story emphasis)

14. News consultants have a positive impact on the journalistic quality of local TV news. (Positively impact journalistic quality)

15. Recommendations of news consultants are based more on current industry trends than on well-researched information. (Recommendations mainly from industry trends)

16. News consultants help news directors do a better job with their newscasts. (Help news directors do better job)

17. Journalistic integrity is affected negatively by the recommendations of news consultants. (Negatively affect journalistic integrity)

18. In general, news consultants are very valuable to local TV news departments. (Generally very valuable)

19. News consultants have a visible impact on the news through the format they prescribe for a station. (Impact through prescribed format)

20. Story recommendations by consultants tend to favor "interesting" news over "important" news. (Favor interesting over important stories)

21. News consultants help maintain a "free press" by keeping local television news economically viable. (Help maintain free press)

22. A news department can serve its viewers better if it doesn't rely on a news consultant. (Serve viewers better w/o consultant)

TABLE 1

Clustering item means sorted by work role.[a]

Item	News Directors (n=10)	Prod./AE (n=20)	Range
7. Focus groups provide poor guidance.	-2.40	0.40	2.80**
22. Serve viewers better w/o consultants	-2.30	0.50	2.80**
18. Generally very valuable.	2.50	-0.05	2.55**
3. Ombudsman for viewers.	1.80	-0.65	2.45*
4. Recommendations from valid research.	3.00	0.55	2.45**
16. Help news directors do better job.	2.00	-0.20	2.20*
11. Complicate producer's job.	-1.30	0.85	2.15
20. Favor interesting over important stories.	-0.40	1.75	2.15
17. Negatively affect journalistic integrity.	-1.70	0.40	2.10
8. Advice mainly from experience.	-0.30	1.70	2.00
6. Makes producer's job easier.	0.60	-1.35	1.95
15. Recommendations mainly from industry trends.	-0.70	1.10	1.80
14. Positively impact journalistic quality.	0.00	-1.70	1.70
10. Really work for general manager.	-0.70	0.45	1.15
21. Help maintain free press.	-0.50	-1.40	0.90
2. Stations must use a consultant.	-0.70	-1.40	0.70
12. Recommendations "seat of the pants"	-1.80	-1.15	0.65
13. Shape news by story emphasis.	0.10	0.75	0.65
5. Topic recommendations have great impact.	0.50	0.15	0.35
9. Clearly impact story presentation.	1.90	1.55	0.35
1. Little impact on content.	-1.00	-0.80	0.20
19. Impact through prescribed format.	2.20	2.10	0.10

[a] Where +5 means "agree strongly" and -5 means "disagree strongly."
Statistically significant difference between means based on t-tests, where *=p≤.05 and **=p≤.01.

TABLE 2

Cluster memberships of news directors and producer/assignment editors

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Total
News directors	7	3	10
Producer/AEs	7	13	20
Total	14	16	30

TABLE 3

Clustering item means sorted by range between clusters.[a]

Item	Cluster1 (n=14)	Cluster2 (n=16)	Range
22. Serve viewers better w/o consultant.	-3.00	1.81	4.81**
17. Negatively affect journalistic integrity.	-2.64	1.75	4.39**
20. Favor interesting over important stories.	-1.21	3.00	4.21**
10. Really work for general manager.	-2.14	2.00	4.14**
18. Generally very valuable.	3.00	-1.12	4.12**
16. Help news directors do better job.	2.71	-1.38	4.09**
8. Advice mainly from experience.	-1.00	2.81	3.81**
15. Recommendations mainly from industry trends.	-1.50	2.25	3.75**
14. Positively impact journalistic quality.	0.79	-2.81	3.60**
11. Complicate producer's job.	-1.64	1.69	3.33**
3. Ombudsman for viewers.	1.86	-1.31	3.17**
6. Makes producer's job easier.	0.93	-2.12	3.05**
4. Recommendations from valid research.	2.93	0.00	2.93**
12. Recommendations "seat of the pants."	-2.79	-0.12	2.67**
7. Focus groups provide poor guidance.	-1.86	0.62	2.48**
2. Stations must use a consultant.	0.07	-2.25	2.32*
21. Help maintain free press.	0.00	-2.06	2.06**
13. Shape news by story emphasis.	-0.43	1.38	1.81*
19. Impact through prescribed format.	1.21	2.94	1.73*
5. Topic recommendations have great impact.	-0.07	0.56	0.63
1. Little impact on content.	-0.64	-1.06	0.42
9. Clearly impact story presentation.	1.64	1.69	0.05

[a] Where +5 means "agree strongly" and -5 means "disagree strongly." Statistically significant difference between means based on t-tests, where *=$p \leq .05$ and **=$p \leq .01$.

TABLE 4

Clustering item means sorted by Cluster 1.[a]

Item	Cluster1	Cluster2
18. Generally very valuable.	3.00	-1.12
4. Recommendations from valid research.	2.93	0.00
16. Help news directors do better job.	2.71	-1.38
3. Ombudsman for viewers.	1.86	-1.31
9. Clearly impact story presentation.	1.64	1.69
19. Impact through prescribed format.	1.21	2.94
6. Makes producer's job easier.	0.93	-2.12
14. Positively impact journalistic quality.	0.79	-2.81
2. Stations must use a consultant.	0.07	-2.25
21. Help maintain free press.	0.00	-2.06
5. Topic recommendations have great impact.	-0.07	0.56
13. Shape news by story emphasis.	-0.43	1.38
1. Little impact on content.	-0.64	-1.06
8. Advice mainly from experience.	-1.00	2.81
20. Favor interesting over important stories.	-1.21	3.00
15. Recommendations mainly from industry trends.	-1.50	2.25
11. Complicate producer's job.	-1.64	1.69
7. Focus groups provide poor guidance.	-1.86	0.62
10. Really work for general manager.	-2.14	2.00
17. Negatively affect journalistic integrity.	-2.64	1.75
12. Recommendations "seat of the pants"	-2.79	-0.12
22. Serve viewers better w/o consultant.	-3.00	1.81

[a] Where +5 means "agree strongly" and -5 means "disagree strongly."

TABLE 5

Clustering item means sorted by Cluster 2.[a]

Item	Cluster1	Cluster2
20. Favor interesting over important stories.	-1.21	3.00
19. Impact through prescribed format.	1.21	2.94
8. Advice mainly from experience.	-1.00	2.81
15. Recommendations mainly from industry trends.	-1.50	2.25
10. Really work for general manager.	-2.14	2.00
22. Serve viewers better w/o consultant.	-3.00	1.81
17. Negatively affect journalistic integrity.	-2.64	1.75
9. Clearly impact story presentation.	1.64	1.69
11. Complicate producer's job.	-1.64	1.69
13. Shape news by story emphasis.	-0.43	1.38
7. Focus groups provide poor guidance.	-1.86	0.62
5. Topic recommendations have great impact.	-0.07	0.56
4. Recommendations from valid research.	2.93	0.00
12. Recommendations "seat of the pants"	-2.79	-0.12
1. Little impact on content.	-0.64	-1.06
18. Generally very valuable.	3.00	-1.12
3. Ombudsman for viewers.	1.86	-1.31
16. Help news directors do better job.	2.71	-1.38
21. Help maintain free press.	0.00	-2.06
6. Makes producer's job easier.	0.93	-2.12
2. Stations must use a consultant.	0.07	-2.25
14. Positively impact journalistic quality.	0.79	-2.81

[a] Where +5 means "agree strongly" and -5 means "disagree strongly."

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An Ethnic Study of Polarization in a Multi-Channel Environment

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An Ethnic Study of Polarization in a Multi-Channel Environment

If a decade or more ago you had asked the question, "What is television doing to American society?" one of the anwers would have revolved around the idea of a homogenization effect. Veteran broadcaster Eric Sevareid, for example, was quoted in 1982 as saying television had counteracted the country's tendency toward fragmentation (Mann, 1982). In reviewing literature on television effects, Comstock (1978) noted that television provided "an unprecedented sharing of the same experience" (p. 19), which may have served to reduce differences between various strata of society. It was thought that programs like "All in the Family" provided a national forum for topics such as bigotry.

However, these observations were made when most viewers tuned to one of three major broadcast networks, prior to today's multi-channel television environment. Webster (1986) observed that the three networks were essentially the same in their offerings, allowing "theorists to treat television as a single, undifferentiated medium" (p. 79). "It is no longer safe to assume that the knowledge generated from the audiences of the 1970s and early 1980s will hold in today's multi-channel, multi-service environment," according to Krugman (1989, p. 77).

As noted by Heeter and Greenberg (1988), differences between traditional broadcast television and today's multi-channel cable environment include not only a greater number of choices but channels offering specialized fare around-the-clock instead of broadcast's mixture of program types which necessitated that viewers tune in at specific times of day for specific types of programs. Another difference cited by the researchers is that broadcast has been viewed as being "free," while customers must pay for cable. Because of these differences, Heeter and Greenberg (1985) posit that cable offers "the potential to improve predictions of selective exposure" (p. 220) and that loyalty to the specific cable channels will be more pronounced with cable in comparison to traditional broadcast viewing. Heeter and Greenberg (1988) also suggest that the choices made on cable should be a more accurate reflection of viewer's content preferences.

With many cable channels offering much narrower foci, Webster (1986) speculated there would be an increasing polarization of television audiences as viewers will be "in a position to construct media environments that may be quite different from those of their neighbors" (p. 77). Early cable audience studies show the beginnings of a trend toward the cable environment differing from broadcast. For example, Kaplan (1978), Agostino (1980), Metzger (1983), and Webster (1983) noted decreasing shares of the major broadcast affiliates in cable households. Rothe, Harvey and Michael (1983) found greater viewing of most program types in cable households. As for news viewing, a study by Webster (1984) indicated significantly less viewing of local news by cable households, while Henke, Donohue, Cook and Cheung (1984) concluded that cable accounted for less viewing of news from the three major broadcast networks. Surveys by Reagan (1984) showed CNN acting more as a supplement rather than a replacement for broadcast news offerings. A more recent study (Baldwin, Barrett and Bates, 1992) found dwindling viewing of national news on broadcast in favor of CNN in cable households; there was even less viewing of the broadcast offerings in pay cable households.

Additional studies have focused on other specialized channels offered on cable. For example, in focusing on the audience of the Playboy Channel, Greenberg, Sipes and McDonough (1988) described some demographic differences when comparing subscribers to Playboy, Disney, HBO and Cinemax. Other differences included Playboy viewers watching more television and having greater exposure to adult magazines and R-rated movies. Although there were not significant differences in viewing gratifications between the groups, Playboy viewers had different beliefs about pre-marital sex and male domination of women.

Heavy MTV viewers were found to be younger, less well educated, from larger households, and more apt to be male and single, according to Paugh (1988). Additionally, the heavy viewers of MTV were less culturally oriented, more materialistic and less conservative.

Differences in viewing styles between program types mostly offered on specialized cable channels (e.g. MTV, pay movie services, ESPN, and CNN) were examined by Heeter and Baldwin (1988). An example of described differences included the extent to which people plan ahead to watch programs or whether they run across them when changing channels. The researchers also speculated that viewers to pay-movie channels were engaging in instrumental, as opposed to ritualistic, viewing. This opens larger questions pertaining to different viewing orientations in a multi-channel environment and the relationship of motivations and polarization.

Rubin (1984) identified instrumental viewing as more selective and purposeful; it is associated with greater information seeking and thus, greater viewing of news programs. Ritualized viewing, on the other hand, is identified with viewing television for companionship or to pass the time. Findings by Childers and Krugman (1989) indicated more instrumental viewing among subscribers to a new pay service in contrast to traditional viewers of television who were more ritualized in their viewing. Perse (1990) found higher levels of program selection associated with instrumental viewing.

Minority Audiences

Even in the age of limited broadcast choices, minority audiences showed some distinct patterns of television viewing. For example, when Spanish-language radio was available, it drew more than 40% of the Hispanic audience, according to two different studies (Rosenthal, 1978; Spanish-language market study, 1977). A Spanish-language UHF television station in Los Angeles was selected as the favorite station of 35% of Hispanic respondents (Lopez and Enos, 1973), the choice more positively correlated by those who spoke Spanish at home. A study of a Spanish-language television series by Marshall, Eiselein, Duncan and Bogarin (1974) indicated that it was preferred by those who preferred to speak Spanish; the series had lower ratings among Hispanic teens. Going beyond language differences to programming preferences, Eiselein and Marshall (1971, 1976) found preferences for music and news programming among Hispanics, while a study by Greenberg, Burgoon, Burgoon, and Korzenny (1983) concluded Hispanics had greater preferences than whites for situation comedies, soap operas, movies, game shows, and police.detective shows.

Several studies focusing on African-Americans have indicated preferences for programming containing own-race portrayals (Dates, 1980; Greenberg, 1972; Greenberg and Atkin, 1982; Surlin, 1978). Documented differences in programming preferences between African-Americans and whites go back many years (Carey, 1966). Also, demographic and attitudinal differences among African-Americans have accounted for varying programming preferences (Allen and Bielby, 1979; Calhoun, 1979; Shosteck, 1969; Tan, 1978; Tan and Vaughn, 1976).

A few studies focus on minorities in a multi-channel environment. In examining television diary information about the viewers of Spanish-language stations, Webster (1986) found a small percentage of Hispanics who spent a disproportionately large amount of time viewing the stations. In a study of African-American cable television subscribers, Jones (1990) concluded those who spent more time watching BET (Black Entertainment Television) were younger and had high racial-orientation levels. Finally, Kolbert (1993) reported on a study conducted by a New York advertising agency showing that during the first half of the 1992-93 television season not one of the top 10 rated television programs among African-Americans was among the top 10 shows in the overall rating. Among the top 20 shows there were only four matches, contrasted to some 15 of 20 in a similar study eight years earlier.

This more recent disparity was attributed to more programs featuring African-American actors that were found mostly on the Fox Network.

Thus, polarization of audiences occurs not only by demographics, interests and attitudes, but it is also observed within minority groups. Further, polarization may be tied to the motivations of individuals for watching television in the first place.

Research Questions

The foregoing observations lead to the following research questions:

1) To what extent does polarization occur between ethnic groups in a multi-channel environment?

2) To what extent do specialized channels aimed at specific ethnic groups lead to polarization within those groups? If there is polarization in these analyses, will it also result in differences in demographics and motivations? Will polarization also account for different television program preferences?

3) To what extent will audiences be polarized who are viewers to specific cable channels? Will polarization result in differences in demographics and motivations? In different television program preferences?

Methodology

A telephone survey was administered to adults living in Dallas, Texas, between mid-May and August, 1991. In this city of 1.85 million, 57% are white, 20% are African-American, 17% are Hispanic, and 6% are Asians and other races (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990). While 60% of the Hispanics in the U.S. are Mexican-descent, 89% of Dallas Hispanics are of Mexican heritage (Davis, Haub, and Willette, 1988).

Because minorities have been undersampled in studies utilizing a random method of selection, a stratified random method was used in this study with an objective of generating a sample consisting of one-third each whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics. Telephone prefixes consisting of the first five digits were selected according to a ratio that would oversample ethnic areas shown on a map provided by the telephone company. Added digit dialing using two random numbers at the end of each phone number was used to reach new and unlisted households (Frey, 1989).[1]

Monitoring revealed the above approach was successful in reaching African-Americans and whites, but Hispanics were being undersampled. Therefore, a skip interval method was utilized with selection from the local telephone directory among Hispanic surnames with telephone exchanges in the city.[2] This selection method was used only to reach Hispanics.

The mean duration of telephone interviews was 8.1 minutes. The completion rate was 30% for African-Americans and white respondents and 65.9% for Hispanics, the difference in completion rates attributable to different sampling procedures. Those who administered the questionnaire were trained and paid. Questionnaires were available in both Spanish and English, and members of the research team who called Hispanics were bilingual.

Measures

Following the introduction, respondents were asked nine items to measure motivations for watching television. Most items were modified from Rubin (1981, 1983, 1984) including "it allows me to unwind," "it entertains me," "It helps me learn about myself and others," "to keep aware of current events," "it's enjoyable," "it relaxes me," "where there is nothing to do," "to learn about new things," and "it gives me something to do." Responses for these items ranged from strongly agree (coded as 5) to strongly disagree (coded as 1).

Respondents were next queried about the frequency of watching certain program types, which included news/newsmagazines, sports, movies, situation comedies, game shows, police/detective, music programs, dramatic shows, soap operas, talk/interview programs, reality programs, and westerns.

Respondents were then asked about the frequency of watching specific cable networks. These included CNN, ESPN, TBS, TNT, MTV, USA, the Weather Channel, and shopping channels; these were selected to represent channels offering specialized information (CNN, the Weather Channel, shopping channels), specialized entertainment (ESPN, MTV), or more broad-based programming (TBS, TNT, USA). To both the program types and the cable networks, responses included always (coded as a 5), frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never (coded as a 1).

Following the query about cable networks, respondents were asked, "What other cable channels do you regularly watch?" Each response was followed by a probe ("Is there another?") until respondents answered negatively. All respondents were within the city limits of Dallas, served exclusively by Dallas TCI Cablevision. At the time of the survey, basic subscribers had access to 70 channels.

Demographic variables included age, gender, ethnicity, and household size.. Ordinal scales were used to measure education (1 = less than high school, 5 = attended graduate school) and "last year" household income (1 = less than $15,000, 5 = $60,000 or higher).

Results

Altogether, 1,241 respondents were interviewed, including 33.8% whites (n = 412), 28.6% African-Americans (n = 348), and 37.6% Hispanics (n = 458). Excluded from further analyses were Asians, individuals who were a part of "other" ethnic groups, and cases where ethnicity was a missing value, totalling 1.9% of the total sample.

Whites had the highest incidence of cable subscription (49.3%), followed by Hispanics (43.5%) and African-Americans (36.2%) (X^2 = 13.2, d.f. = 2, $p < .001$). Only cable subscribers were analyzed for this study. Total cable subscribers interviewed were 529, including 204 whites (38.6%), 126 African-Americans (23.8%), and 199 Hispanics (37.6%).

Among these cable subscribers whites were the oldest ($\bar{x}$ = 41.3 years), followed by Hispanics ($\bar{x}$ = 35.8 years), and then African-Americans ($\bar{x}$ = 35.3 years) (F = 9.6, $p < .0001$). Additionally, white cable subscribers had significantly higher levels of education, followed by African-Americans, then Hispanics (X^2 = 184.4, d.f. = 4, $p < .000001$), and whites had the highest income level, again followed by African-Americans, then Hispanics (X^2 = 141.4, d.f. = 4, $p < .000001$). Hispanics ranked highest in size of household number ($\bar{x}$ = 3.9), followed by African-Americans ($\bar{x}$ = 3.4), and whites ($\bar{x}$ = 2.5) (F = 48.8, p .00001). When given the choice, 69.5% of the Hispanics opted to take the questionnaire in Spanish. In comparison to Hispanics who chose the English-language questionnaire, those who chose the Spanish language were older (Spanish $\bar{x}$ = 36.1 years; English $\bar{x}$ = 32.8 years, t = -2.3, $p < .023$), came from larger household sizes (Spanish $\bar{x}$ = 4.1, English $\bar{x}$ = 3.6, t = -3.1, $p < .002$), and had both lower levels of education (X^2 = 63.1, d.f. = 4, $p < .000001$) and income (X^2 = 29.8, d.f. = 4, $p < .00001$).

There were significant indications of polarization between ethnic groups in the viewing of selected cable channels. (See Table 1.) Out of the eight analyses of variance that controlled for age, education and income, TBS was the only station where there were not signficant differences in viewing by ethnicity. Whites tallied the highest mean on the viewing of CNN. Hispanics were the heaviest viewers of the Weather Channel, and African-Americans watched the most of TNT, MTV, and USA. African-Americans and Hispanics were nearly identical in their viewing of shopping channels.

To measure polarization within ethnic groups, the open-ended item was used. ("What other cable channels do you regularly watch?)

The 28.5% of African-Americans who named BET were analyzed in relationship to African-Americans who did not name it. As can be seen in Table 2, BET viewers were younger with higher levels of education and income. There were no significant differences in motivations for viewing between the two groups. In the analyses of program types, music was the only type where BET viewers scored significantly difference (BET $\bar{x}$ = 3.9, non-BET $\bar{x}$ = 3.0, t = 3.3, $p < .001$). Among the specific cable channels, there were two significant differences with BET viewers watching more of MTV (BET $\bar{x}$ = 4.1, non-BET $\bar{x}$ = 3.2, t = 3.4, $p < .001$) but less of TNT (BET $\bar{x}$ = 2.5, non-BET $\bar{x}$ = 3.0, t = - 2.0, $p < .047$).

Table 2

Demographic Differences of African-Americans by BET Viewing

	Age	Education*	Income**
BET $\bar{x}$	31.9	3.0	3.0
Non-BET $\bar{x}$	37.4	2.5	2.5
t =	- 2.0	2.4	2.2
p <	.044	.019	.030

* 2 = high school graduate, 3 = attended college

** 2 = $15,000-30,000, 3 = $30,000-45,000

To probe polarization among Hispanics, the 42.7% of Hispanics respondents who named one or more of the three Spanish-language networks available (Galavision, Univision, and Telemundo) were contrasted to those who did not. As might be expected, there was a greater likelihood of watching a Spanish-language channel among those who took the questionnaire in Spanish (61.8%) compared to English (16.7%) (X^2 = 38.8, d.f. = 1, $p < .000001$). While there was not a significant difference in age between the viewers and non-viewers of Spanish-language cable offerings, those who did name a network had significantly lower levels of education (named Spanish network $\bar{x} = 2.0$, didn't name Spanish network $\bar{x} = 2.4$, $t = -2.4$, $p < .016$) and income (named network $\bar{x} = 1.9$, didn't name network $\bar{x} = 2.2$, $t = -2.4$, $p < .02$).

As with the BET viewers, no differences were observed among Hispanics in their motivations for viewing ethnic programming aimed at them. Shopping channels was the only selected cable offering where there was a significant difference between the groups. (Named a Spanish network $\bar{x} = 1.9$; didn't name a Spanish network $\bar{x} = 1.6$, $t = 2.0$, $p < .052$). There were five program types where the two Hispanic groups differed, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Differences in Program Types* Among Hispanics by the Watching of Spanish-Language Channels

	News	Music	Soaps	Talk	Westerns
Named Spanish Channel $\bar{x}$	4.3	3.4	3.1	3.7	2.9
Didn't Name $\bar{x}$	4.0	2.9	2.4	3.2	2.5
t =	2.1	2.7	3.4	3.9	2.2
p <	.037	.008	.001	.001	.029

*A 5-point scale where 5 = always watch and 1 = never watch.

The entire sample of cable subscribers was analyzed to determine polarization by the viewing of the eight cable offerings that were named on the questionnaire. Figure 1 displays differences in demographics, motivations, the viewing of program types, and viewing of the seven other cable channels named on the questionnaire. For these analyses t-tests were used to assess differences between those who said they always or frequently watch a cable offering and those who said they occasionally, rarely or never watch. (Means, t values and significance levels are available from the authors; they were omitted from Figure 1 for clarity of presentation.)

As can be seen, there were demographic differences on all cable channels except ESPN, TBS, and TNT. The findings that CNN had an older, more highly educated, upper income audience could have been predicted, as could MTV with its younger, less educated, lower income audience. However, lower education levels among the audiences of USA, the Weather Channel, and shopping channels were more of a surprise.

With each of the cable channels, there were differences in motivations, frequency of viewing programming types, and viewing of at least some of the seven remaining cable offerings. Cable channels varied greatly in the number of significant findings. For example, there was only one significant finding in the area of motivations for the heavier viewers of TBS, but there were six motivational differences separating the heavier viewers of TNT from the light or non-viewers. The heavier CNN viewers scored significantly higher on only two program types (news and sports), while the heavier viewers of USA scored higher on 11 programming types. Similar patterns emerged with the viewing of cable offerings.

Discussion

Clearly, the multi-channel environment observed in this study produced evidence of a polarized audience. There were numerous differences in the viewing of cable channels between ethnic groups. Polarization also occurred within ethnic groups via specialized programming targeted to specific ethnic groups. Finally, there were numerous differences in demographics, motivations and viewing preferences when looking at the audiences of selected cable channels.

These findings would seem to verify the suggestion of Heeter and Greenberg (1988) that cable should be a more accurate reflection than broadcast of viewers' content preferences. For example, it was well documented in broadcast studies that many blacks preferred programming containing black actors and that a significant number of Hispanics preferred programming in Spanish. Broadcast channel limitations did not make these choices widely available. With their around-the-clock availability on cable, large numbers of each ethnic group show they will make ample use of ethnic programming. However, this is not true for all members of ethnic groups, which is where the polarization manifests itself within these groups. The notion of selective exposure may go a long way toward explaining the phenomenon of audience polarization.

Implications of these findings are far-reaching, but just a few possibilities will be mentioned here. For example, Comstock (1978) noted that the homogenization effect of television strengthened the current social hierarchy and reduced differences in society. The multi-channel environment would seem be one aspect of a society that is increasingly pluralistic.

Of course, there are also implications for mass media researchers. Webster (1986) stated that a view of television presenting homogeneous messages "is at the heart of the arguments of powerful media effects" (p. 80). If this is the case and with 500-channel capabilities for some cable systems anticipated for 1995 ("An explosion," 1993), media researchers will need to take a hard look at the assumptions underlying even the most basic research efforts. The new media environment would seem ripe for the launching of new theories and the inculcation of different acacemic disciplines to help researchers understand the relationship of television and its increasingly segmented audience.

As to specifics from the findings in this study, there was more instrumental viewing among the heavier viewers of both CNN and the Weather Channel, which was to be expected. However, a closer examination reveals polarization among these viewers seeking informational programming because these channels seem to be attracting different audiences. CNN viewers had higher levels of education, while the Weather Channel viewers had lower levels of education. Since CNN appealed more to whites and the Weather Channel more to Hispanics and because of the demographic differences between these groups, it may be an indication of information-seeking pertaining to meeting needs specific to one's circumstances in life. For example, unskilled and blue-collar workers are much more apt to work outside and be affected by the weather.

There were two significant motivations for viewers of shopping channels, one of the motivations was instrumental (learning) and the other was ritualistic ("it gives me something to do," a diversionary use of television). Shopping channels appealed more to minorities and individuals with lower levels of education from larger household sizes. The shopping-at-home television experience may be a substitute for a visit to the mall, which would seem to have both diversionary and educational functions.

The remaining channels all had varying ritualistic motivations, also indicating polarization among individuals in the very reasons individuals use to tune in a specific channel. One must logically wonder whether these various channels are meeting the pre-existing needs of viewers, and thus accounting for different sets of motivations, or whether the watching of these channels brings about changes in motivations. Williams, Phillips and Lum (1985) suggested that new communication technologies be examined to learn "how, or if, gratifications change with media characteristics" (p. 244).

While there were significant differences in motivations for viewing all of the selected cable networks, there were not differences in motivations among minorities between those who viewed specific programming aimed at those minority groups and those who did not. This was true among African-Americans for the viewing of BET and among Hispanics for viewing of Spanish-language programming, despite the fact that there were differences in demographics and programming preferences in each case.

Why should there be differences in motivations for watching the selected cable offerings discussed above but not the specific channels offered to minorities? One possibility is the difference in methodology. Respondents were given the names of the selected cable networks and viewing of them was measured on Likert-type scales, an aided measure. Viewers to BET and the Spanish-language channels had to name these networks in the section where respondents were asked if there were any other cable networks they regularly watched, an unaided measure.

Another possible reason for differences in motivations by channel but not within ethnic groups is that the measured differences in motivations between the selected cable offerings may be partially explainable by the fact that there are differences in viewing motivations between ethnic groups (Albarran and Umphrey, 1993). However, the Jones (1990) study did find different attitudes as well as demographics in a study of African-Americans who were BET viewers and those who were not. Thus, the question of whether there are different motivations within ethnic groups for the watching of specialized programming aimed at them would seem to warrant further study, perhaps with different measures than were used here.

The findings of this study also suggest a relationship between polarization and channel repertoire, a relationship about which Heeter and Greenberg (1988) speculated. According to these researchers, repertoire is a phenomenon suggesting that while cable subscribers have a wide array of choices available to them, they have a limited set of channels which they watch regularly. This was substantiated by Sparkes and Delbel (1989). It applies to the polarization of audiences, according to Webster (1986), because when viewing only a limited number of channels, individuals are more apt to fall into a use/non-use dichotomy of specific offerings. In this way there is a vast difference in the television experience from one person to the next.

While the methodology used in this study is not a true measurement of repertoire, the findings showed that individuals who said they always or frequently watched the channels providing more broad-based programming offerings (TBS, TNT, USA), which more closely mimic the major broadcast networks, watched significantly more of the other specified cable channels. TNT and USA viewers watched significantly more of all the other seven specified channels, while TBS viewers watched more of six of them. This contrasts to viewers of more specialized programming (CNN, ESPN, MTV, the Weather Channel, and shopping networks) where the viewers watched significantly more of four other networks. A smaller repertoire would be associated with greater polarization.

The findings suggesting a smaller repertoire for the viewers of specialized channels did not hold up in the analyses of program types, though. For example, with two programming services offering very specialized programming, the viewers of MTV said they watched significantly more of 10 program types, while CNN viewers scored higher on only two. There were several indications in these analyses of individuals with lower levels of education naming more programming types. Thus, the relationships with program types may not be an indicator of channel repertoire, but may indicate that the use of television program types is not an appropriate tool in the new media environment.

Shortcomings of this study include the fact that the results are based on a "one-hit" study; the results show a polarized audience, but due to the nature of the methodology it cannot be said that the results show greater or lesser polarization in comparison to another period of time. A second shortcoming is that the findings are based on findings from one market, thus results may not be generalizable. Additionally, there were low response rates to the survey, leaving open the question of what type of self-selection effects are present. Finally, the new media environment includes not only cable television with its multiple channels, but also VCR taping and time-shifting, the rental of programming for the VCR, the use of remote control devices, and pay-per-view. Future research may be aimed at studying polarization and all of these aspects of the new media environment, concurrently.

Despite these shortcomings, these findings serve to provide further information about polarization of the television audience, particularly as it pertains to minorities.

Notes

1 According to Survey Sampling, Inc., a professional sampling firm based in Fairfield, Connecticut, approximately 23.1% of all telephones in this market are unlisted.

2 Chang, Shoemaker, Reese, and Danielson (1988) compared random digit dialing and the use of surnames to sample Hispanics and found the two methods produced similar results.

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Table 1

Mean Scores and ANOVA Results for Cable Channels Across Ethnic Segments Controlling for Age, Education and Income

In a regular week, how often watch . . .	Whites	Afr-Amer.	Hispanics	Total	F Score
	(n = 204)	(n = 126)	(n = 199)		
CNN	3.47	2.97	3.36	3.31	6.59**
ESPN	2.82	3.10	2.92	2.92	3.08*
Superstation TBS	2.81	2.97	2.70	2.80	1.93
TNT	2.62	2.90	2.47	2.63	4.76**
MTV, music videos	2.33	3.35	2.80	2.74	14.59**
USA Network	2.52	2.98	2.83	2.74	3.67*
Weather Channel	2.40	2.45	2.77	2.55	3.48*
Shopping Channels	1.21	1.66	1.70	1.50	6.34**

(5=always watch, 4=frequently watch, 3=occasionally watch, 2=rarely watch, 1=never watch)

*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$

Figure 1

A Typology of Audience Polarization in Cable Television Households

	CNN	ESPN	TBS	TNT	MTV	USA	Weather	Shopping
Demographics	Older Higher Ed. Higher Inc. Smaller HH	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	Younger Lower Ed. Lower Inc. Larger HH	Lower Ed. Larger HH	Older Lower Ed.	Lower Ed. Larger HH
Motivations	Learn Aware	Entertain Relaxation	Unwind	Unwind Entertain Enjoy Relaxation Some to do Nothing	Entertain Enjoy Some to do Nothing	Entertain Enjoy	Learn Aware New Things	Learn Some to do
Program Types	News Sports	Sports Police Drama Westerns	Sports Movies Sitcoms GameShow Police Westerns	Sports Movies GameShow Police Drama Reality Westerns	Sports Movies Sitcoms GameShow Police Music Drama Soap Operas Reality Talk	Sports Movies Sitcoms GameShow Police Music Drama Soap Operas Reality Talk Westerns	News GameShow Police Music Talk Reality Westerns	Movies GameShow Police Music Drama Soap Operas Talk Reality Westerns
Other Cable Channels	ESPN TNT USA Weather	CNN TBS TNT USA	ESPN TNT MTV USA Weather Shopping	CNN ESPN TBS MTV USA Weather Shopping	TBS TNT USA Shopping	CNN ESPN TBS TNT MTV Weather Shopping	CNN TNT USA Shopping	TNT MTV USA Weather

Note: In these analyses white, African-American, and Hispanic respondents who said they always or frequently watch each of the above cable networks were compared to those who said they occassionally, rarely or never watched. T-tests were used and each of the above findings were significant at a level of $p < .05$.

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Information Subsidies and Agenda Building:
A Study of Local Radio News

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Running head: RADIO AGENDA BUILDING

Abstract

A four week study of a radio newsroom's information subsidies found nineteen percent were used to make up part of a newscast. However, twenty percent of the subsidies, more than were used in a newscast, were never opened, suggesting news directors make two decisions on each subsidy. The first decision, to open the subsidy, is made using information from the envelope. The second decision is then to use the subsidy on air.

Information Subsidies and Agenda Building:
A Study of Local Radio News

Literature Review

The original agenda setting research by McCombs and Shaw (1972) focused on the relationship between the content of the mass media and what the audience saw as important issues. Studies testing this relationship make up the majority of agenda setting research (Iorio & Huxman, 1993; Roberts, 1992; Salwen, 1988; Shaw & Martin, 1992; Stone & McCombs, 1981; Wanta, 1991).

Maxwell McCombs (International Encyclopedia of Communications, 1989), an author of the original agenda setting study, credits Gladys and Kurt Lang with expanding the view of agenda setting to include agenda building in their 1981 study of Watergate. Lang and Lang (1983) borrowed the term from political research to represent a reciprocal process between suppliers of information, the press that receives the information, and the public that consumes the information. Agenda Building has since come to represent the relationship between a newsroom and its sources (Berkowitz, 1992).

Agenda setting research implies that the media have the ability to impress their agenda onto the public by communicating relative importance of issues and events (Rogers & Dearing, 1988). But does the media create their own agenda? Agenda building research argues they don't.

Examples include Herbert Gans (1979) who offers an "externally centered theory" that news is shaped by the sources on which a newsroom relies (Gans, 1979, p. 79). Gandy (1982) expands this view by describing the relationship between a newsroom and its sources as one of mutual need. Both sides offer what the other side wants. The question is, what do both sides want?

On the source side of this relationship, VanSlyke Turk (1985) writes that sources become involved with the media because newsrooms offer a vehicle to an audience. More than that, newsrooms also offer a possible vehicle to a policy maker that could have his or her opinion on an issue swayed due to a newsroom using a source's information on the air or in print (Gandy, 1982). Sources will vie for time or space because they want their position broadcast or put into print. Kanervo and Kanervo (1989) point out that when a source has succeeded in getting its position into a newscast it's more than a victory for the source, it's a loss for others. Time or space has been taken away from a competitive viewpoint.

On the other side of the relationship, the media enjoy a steady flow of information from their sources on a regular and timely basis (Signal, 1986). Sources not only provide newsrooms with information, they make a newsroom's job of putting out a daily news product attainable. The rigors a newsroom faces in creating its broadcasts or daily editions have become too much for one staff to handle. Covering world, state, and local news from one location is not possible.

Sources provide their information to a newsroom in the form of an information subsidy (Gandy, 1982). Berkowitz (1990) defines a subsidy as a press release, public service announcement, meeting notice, magazine, newsletter, audio and video feed, or anything sent to the media in order to gain time or space.

The sources offer the information and the newsroom relies on the information. Gans refers to this relationship between the media and their sources as "a dance", but "more often than not, the sources do the leading" (Gans, 1979, p.116).

Newsroom costs and time constraints have forced the use of information subsidies (Brown, Bybee, Weardon, & Straughan, 1987). The practice has become so routine that some journalists take it for granted and assume that newscasts should be made by sifting through the day's subsidies (Berkowitz, 1991). For some, the job of going out and covering a news story relies little on a reporter's news sense. Their editor received an information subsidy announcing the event to be covered (Signal, 1986).

While this practice of relying on subsidies makes running a newsroom easier and manageable, it also tends to limit the number of sources a newsroom relies on (Gans, 1972). The newsroom begins to use only a small group of sources it knows have provided credible and useful information in the past (Berkowitz, 1991). This reliance on few sources limits the media from providing a variety of viewpoints (Brown, et al, 1987).

When a newsroom relies on only a small group of sources, the sources themselves tend to be large organizations. These larger sources, like business or government, can provide the usable flow of information better than a smaller source with fewer staff. (Gandy, 1982; Berkowitz, 1987; Soloski, 1989).

The reasons why one source succeeds where another doesn't stems not only from their staff's size but also how the source performs on four different factors: the ability to provide a steady usable flow of information, source incentives, source reputation and power, and source geographic location. (Gans, 1979).

Gans writes that all four of these factors are important, however the ability to produce a steady, usable flow of information is "crucial" (Gans, 1979, p. 117). Sources that get their agenda into local media on a regular basis are meeting the newsroom's requirements of availability and suitability (Gans, 1979; Brown, et al, 1987) In other words, to produce a great deal of information subsidies is not enough. Sending your subsidy to a radio station written in newspaper form will limit the subsidy's chances of being used because it will have to be rewritten before airing. (Morton, 1993; Abbot & Brassfield, 1989; Brown, et al, 1987).

The second factor is source incentives. Gans (1979) describes a source that meets this incentive requirement as an eager source. If a source is eager to provide information, that source increases its chances for air time or space. The source that might not be so free with its information will not be used as often. A source can also increase the media's incentive to use its subsidy by providing more than just information. Sources that create news events for the media to cover are used more often than sources that simply provide information (Fishman, 1980). Public relations research has found that including a coverable event can greatly increase the chances of a press release being used (Morton, 1993).

Credibility is also an incentive. Sources that have provided incorrect or useless information in the past might be purposely overlooked (Stocking, 1985).

The third factor is source power. Gans (1979) writes that sources that are perceived as being powerful and having influence in a community have a better chance at getting their information into the media. Sources that are perceived as possessing this power, however, are not used because they exert their power and influence on a newsroom, rather they use their power, and most probably large size, to create their steady, usable flow of information.

Research has found that one powerful source, government, is able to use its size and power perception. Many studies report government as the media's number one source for information (Soloski, 1989; Drew, 1972; Smith, 1993). Even the earliest study into gatekeeping showed the government to be worthy of Mr. Gates' time (White, 1950).

Geographic location of a source is Gan's fourth factor. Research has widely upheld that the proximity of a news source or event will have a marked effect on the number of sources quoted and sources used (Martin, 1988; Stocking, 1985). Public relations studies regarding press releases stress location. Sending out a "hometowner" can increase the chances of having your information subsidy selected (Morton, 1993, p. 11).

The reasons for studying the relationships between sources and the media are more than an attempt to create the perfect press release. Agenda building is to assess what type of sources are used most frequently, thus exerting the most influence on the media agenda. When a source is successful in getting an agenda into the media, more is being changed than just a day's newscast. The mass media have been credited with the ability to shape reality.

If the media do have this ability, as argued in the construction of social reality theory, then the sources that help to shape the news, help to shape reality also (Adoni & Mane, 1984; Shrum & O'Guinn, 1993; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992). In this gatekeeper view of the media, newsrooms help to create people's reality by choosing what sources they get to hear or read (Weaver & Elliot, 1986; Carter, Stamm, & Heintz-Knowles, 1992).

The mass media have also been touted as part of a system that is dividing the information haves and have-nots. Donohue, Tichenor, and Olien (1973) have gone as far as to say that the media cooperate in a system of social control by the distribution of information. The mass media do distribute information, but whose information?

These are the types of questions agenda building research attempts to answer. As James Winter (1981) writes, "It is not sufficient to simply indicate that relationships occurred. It is important to determine the robustness of relationships."

A Case for Radio

"Radio has become the forgotten medium in media effects investigations" (McCleneghan, 1986)

This quote sums up not only radio's place in agenda setting research, but also research in general. A computer search of scholarly journals turned up relatively little on radio. Furthermore, a ten year content analysis of Journalism Quarterly revealed that their research is dominated by newspaper and television (Bissland, 1993).

An extensive search of the literature was not totally barren. It did turn up two instances of radio being used in an agenda setting experiment.

Williams and Larsen (1977) tested radio for agenda setting effects in an off-election year and found that there was a correlation in regards to local issues.

In addition, McCleneghan (1986) found radio advertising to be one of the top two significant variables in determining winners and losers in New Mexico mayoral races.

With two radio studies, both supporting the agenda setting process in mind, it should be questioned why radio is not being used more in agenda setting studies. In research pitting the print media, television and radio against each other, radio fares very well.

Research has shown that radio can compete in attention levels with television and the print media. (Drew & Weaver, 1990). One study showed no statistical difference in unaided recall between television and radio, (DeFleur, Davenport, Cronin, & DeFleur, 1992).

Other research has shown no difference between radio and other media in the ability to persuade an audience (Pfau, 1990). In addition, audio media, including radio, have been shown to have greater effects than visual or print media in stimulating imagination in classroom situations, (Greenfield & Beagles-Roos, 1988).

One possible reason for radio's slim showing in agenda research might be the stereotype that radio is simply background noise. Research refutes this. It's been shown that people want to hear, and will listen to, news on their radio station regardless of format (Wright & Hosman, 1986).

The reasons behind not using radio for agenda research can be further questioned by studying radio's tremendous reach and audience. In 1989, the Radio Advertising Bureau reported more than 527 million radios in the U. S. Ninety-nine percent of all households and 97 percent of all cars have radios (Patterson, 1989). Every day over 80% of all Americans listen to the radio (Greenburg, 1992).

Statistics differ, but all show radio as the number one source for news in the morning (News on the radio, 1992; Patterson, 1989; Greenburg, 1992)), across all age demographics (Radio Marketing Guide and Handbook, 1992). Radio is also the main source for news in the daytime (News on the Radio, 1992). What's more, radio differs from other media in that a radio audience is a captive audience for longer spans of time. Approximately 25% of all radio listening is done in an automobile. Most of that time the person is alone (Abernethy, 1991). Whereas this may or may not contribute to the agenda setting effect, it certainly sets radio apart, offering new avenues for research.

Radio surges in listenership in times of a crisis or national emergency (Collins, 1991). Radio is the first source for emergency news across all age demographics (Radio Marketing Guide and Handbook, 1992). The immediacy of the medium is best suited for emergency news.

As to information subsidies, radio is no different than television or the print media. The large staffs of radio's golden age are gone (Collins, 1991). Radio newsrooms rely on information subsidies in the same fashion the other media do.

Because of radio being an audio-only medium, it's easier to receive feeds directly into a newsroom (Conners, 1991). A simple phone call is all that's needed to create a sound bite.

Everett Rogers (1992) writes that mass

communications studies would have never occurred if it weren't for the increasing power of the mass media, "especially radio in the 1930s." Mass communication studies began with radio and should continue using radio.

This review of the literature suggests three hypothesis related to radio:

> H1) Subsidies concerning event-related news will be used more than items presenting information material.
>
> H2) The news setting for successful subsidies will be most commonly within the local range of the station.
>
> H3) The originating organizations most successful with subsidies used by journalists will be government related.

Another research question addressed in this study is:

> What factors are most important to a news director in deciding to open an information subsidy or package?

Method

This study is a partial replication of the Berkowitz and Adams (1990) study with television. Data in both studies were collected over a four week period, however Berkowitz and Adams collected their information subsidies in an Indianapolis television station while this study examines information subsidies from the newsroom of a Northwest Ohio radio station. In addition, the Berkowitz and Adams study looked at what information subsidies made the television newsroom's first cut, whereas this study looks at what information subsidies actually made it to air.

The radio newsroom was supplied with two boxes, one marked "aired" and the other marked "not aired." The news director was instructed that anything that came into the newsroom aimed at providing information for a newscast was to be placed in one of the boxes.

A subsidy was to be placed in the "aired" box if its text was used, its information was used, or the event announced in the subsidy was used to help create any part of a newscast. All other subsidies were placed in the "not aired" box.

All subsidies from the radio newsroom were retained. The subsidies were collected weekly and coded over four areas:

1. News setting: local, state, or national.

This coding differed from the original study in the "local" category. Berkowitz and Adams coded news settings as city, state, or national. In discussing the concept of "city" news with three different radio news directors, it was decided that "local" was a better distinction than "city." News was considered local if it fell inside a certain geographic area outlined in Figure 1.

2. Story type: preplanned or informational.

If an information subsidy announced any attendable event, it was coded "preplanned." Subsidies that offered no event were coded "information." This coding scheme was the same as the Berkowitz and Adams study

3. Originating organization: business, education, government/political, special interest groups, or non-profit organizations.

Subsidies were coded as to their origin, not on the content of the subsidy. This code was also the same as the Berkowitz and Adams study.

4. Opened status: opened or not opened.

After two weeks, coders noticed many of the radio subsidies were unopened. All materials were revisited and given this code. This coded variable was in addition to the Berkowitz and Adams study.

After all subsidies were collected and coded, each was checked again and a count was kept of the subsidy's form: public service announcement, press release, magazine or newsletter, brochure or press kit, or miscellaneous. This was the same as the Berkowitz and Adams study.

Two people were responsible for coding 348 pieces. A 98% intercoder reliability of was achieved measured by Holsti's (1969) formula. Additional data for this study were collected through personal contacts with four radio news directors.

Results

Press releases and public service announcements made up the majority, 91 percent, of the 348 information subsidies collected. The remaining 9% broke down into 4% brochures or press kits, 3%

magazines or newsletters, and 2% miscellaneous.

Sixty-five, or 19%, of the subsidies collected were used in a newscast. The sixty-five subsidies were press releases (86%) and public service announcements (14%) alone.

For comparison purposes, the four tables from Berkowitz and Adams have been included in this paper. Note, however, that the Berkowitz and Adams' tables label subsidies "Discarded" and "Kept" because the subsidies in their study were gathered after the first cut. The corresponding terms in this paper are "Not Used" and "Used".

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

Tables 1 and 2 are crosstabulations of a subsidy's news setting and whether the newsrooms decided to use or keep the subsidy. Radio results do not differ greatly from the Berkowitz and Adams study. The greatest percentage of subsidies used and kept falls under the local category.

Insert Tables 3 and 4 about here

Tables 3 and 4 are crosstabulations of the subsidy's story type and whether the newsroom decided to use or keep the subsidy. The radio results also agree with the Berkowitz and Adams study. Information subsidies offering a preplanned event were used more often than subsidies offering just information.

Insert Tables 5 and 6 about here

Tables 5 and 6 are crosstabulations of a subsidy's originating organization and whether the newsrooms decided to use or keep the subsidies. These results differ from the television study. Educational organization subsidies were used most frequently in the radio newsroom while non-profit and special interest subsidies were kept most frequently in the television newsroom. Both newsrooms did, however, use government and business organization subsidies least frequently.

In addition, the television results were statistically significant. The radio results were not.

Insert Tables 7 and 8 about here

Tables 7 and 8 are crosstabulations of subsidy news settings and originating organizations. Here the radio results also differed from the original study. The majority of the education subsidies received by the radio newsroom came from the local level while most of the education subsidies received by the television station came from the state level. The radio newsroom received more non-profit subsidies from the local area than the television newsroom. In addition, the television newsroom received most of its government subsidies from the city and state while the radio newsroom received most of its government subsidies from the state alone.

Two other crosstabulations were performed in this study in addition to those done in the television study. Both of the new crosstabulations looked at what subsidies were opened or not. Over 20% of all subsidies collected, more than made it to air, were never taken out of their envelopes or packages.

Insert Table 9 about here

Table 9 is a crosstabulation of a subsidy's news setting and whether it had been opened or not. Local subsidies were opened most frequently. State subsidies were opened less frequently while national subsidies were left unopened almost a third of the time.

Insert Table 10 about here

Table 10 is a crosstabulation of a subsidy's originating organization and whether it had been opened or not. Education subsidies were opened most frequently. Business and government subsidies were left unopened almost a fifth of the time. Special interest group and non-profit subsidies were opened the least. The results were not statistically significant.

Discussion

This study of agenda building in local radio news yielded results supporting two of the three hypothesis and providing insight into the research question.

> H1) Subsidies concerning event-related news will be used more than items presenting informational material.

This hypothesis was supported. Table 3 clearly showed preplanned event subsidies being used in a newscast more often than informational subsidies.

> H2) The news setting for successful subsidies will be most commonly within

the local range of the station.

This hypothesis was also supported. The results in Table 1 show 30% of local subsidies being used in a newscast. Just over one out of every ten state subsidies received air time and only one national subsidy was given time in a newscast.

The news directors who were contacted for this study all agreed that local news stories are most important. In regards to information subsidies one news director said, "We emphasize local news in our newscasts, so items with a local tie-in will be read first."

H3) The Originating organizations most successful with subsidies used by journalists will be government related.

This hypothesis was not supported. Although Berkowitz and Adams showed a statistical difference for television, this study did not show any difference for radio. Table 5 does however add credence to Gan's (1979) statement that sending a great deal of subsidies in not enough. The sources that sent the most subsidies to the newsroom, government and business, were not used any more frequently that the others.

Table 7, Originating Organization by News Setting, also differed from the Berkowitz and Adams study. Subsidies that came into the radio newsroom from similar organizations were sent from different news settings. These differences can be explained by where the newsroom was located in each study. The television newsroom was located in Indianapolis, a state capital. This study's radio newsroom was in a large city, but not the state capital.

RQ) What factors are most important to a news director in deciding to open a subsidy or package?

The Berkowitz and Adams study gave the impression that all subsidies that came into the television newsroom were taken out of their envelope and considered for air time. That's not the case in this study. More information subsidies were left unopened than were used on the air, 20% to 19% respectively.

The reason for leaving an envelope unopened was not because a duplicate had already been opened. Duplicate subsidies did not occur often. Something about what was printed on the envelope made the difference between a subsidy being opened or not.

The return address on the envelope allowed the news director to be fairly certain what location the contents dealt with. This would explain why local subsidies were opened more than state or national subsidies. However, the location suggested by the envelope was not the only factor in whether it was opened. If it was, then almost all the envelopes suggesting local area subsidies would have been opened rather than only 84%. The originating organization listed on the envelope had something to do with the decision to open the subsidy or not.

The subsidies that remained unopened in the radio newsroom could have come from sources who the news director knows have offered useless or bad information in the past.

This study of unopened subsidies suggests that each subsidy that entered the radio newsroom was decided on twice, once on whether it should be opened and then again on whether it should go into the the newscast.

Conclusions

Who sets the media agenda? The data in this study suggest the radio newsroom's sources had a hand in the process. Nineteen percent of all subsidies received by this newsroom were used in one way or another in creating their daily output of news. What is not known is what percentage of the actual news is made up by the these chosen subsidies.

A local radio news director reported that an average of six stories are used in each newscast. Of these stories, two would come from subsidies. One third of this news director's newscasts could be information received from subsidies. Future agenda building research needs to not only calculate what percentage of subsidies are chosen, but also calculate what percentage of the newscasts are made up by the chosen subsidies.

Another question not answered in this study were the number of standing subsidies used in creating newscasts. A standing subsidy would be a weekly council meeting, a monthly press conference, or any reoccurring event that a news director would cover. Although no press release would be received the information would still have become part of the newscasts and would never had been calculated into the results of this study. A local news director reported that two or three standing subsidies are covered each week.

A new finding from this study is that just because an information subsidy is sent to a newsroom doesn't insure that it will be opened and read. One fifth of the information subsidies in this study weren't taken out of their envelopes. This suggests that two levels of decision making are used in regards to subsidies. The first level is when the subsidy is still in the envelope. The newsroom person will decide, from the information printed on the envelope, whether what's inside would be worthy their time. The second level is the process the newsroom uses to choose which opened subsidies will make up part of a newscast.

The results of this study suggest deeper research is needed in agenda building. It is not enough to say that relationships between sources and newsrooms exist. We must determine the robustness of those relationships and the impact on newscasts those sources have.

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Figure 1. "Local" area.

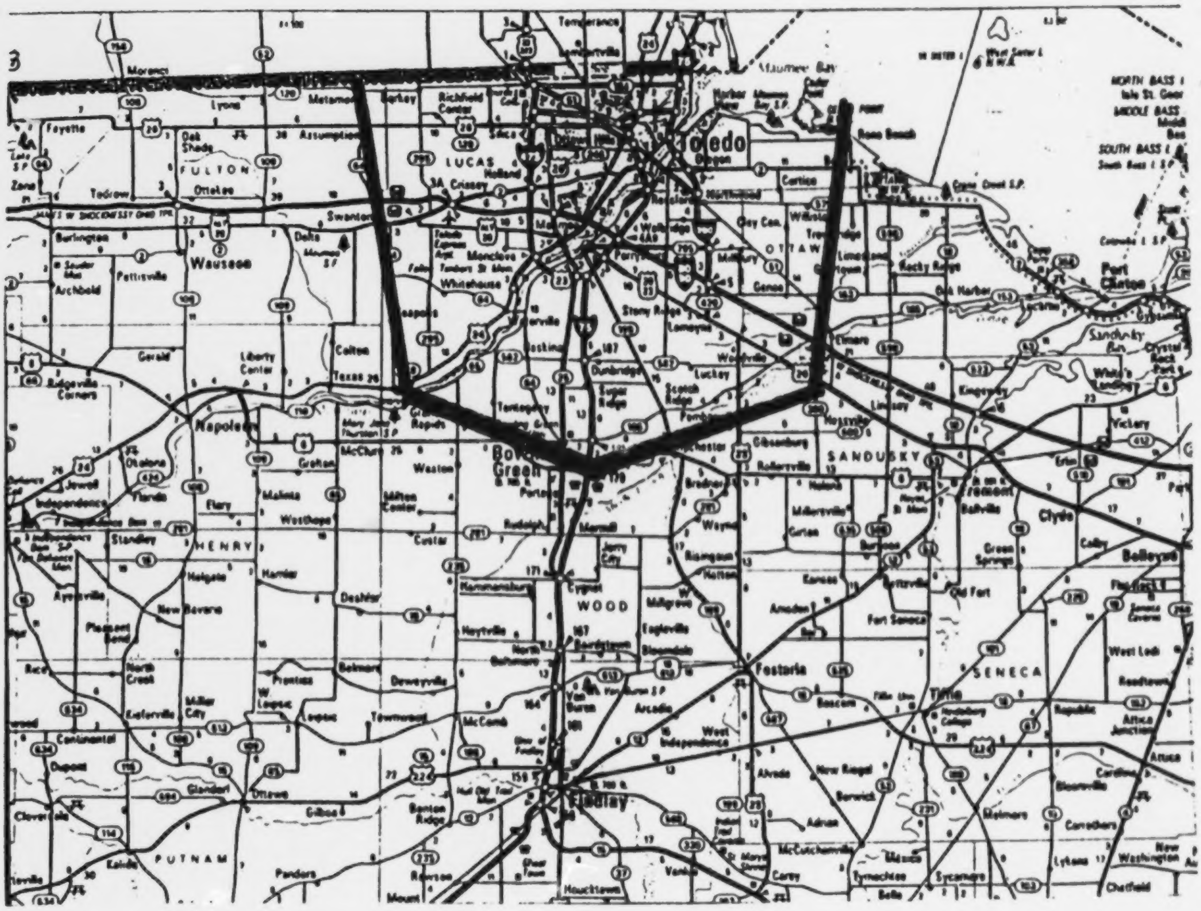

Table 1 (radio)

Information Subsidy Not Used/Used by News Setting

News Setting	Not Used	Used	Total	
Local	70%	30%	100%	N=162
State	88%	12%	100%	N=124
National	98%	2%	100%	N= 62
TOTAL	81%	19%	100%	N=348

X2=29.69 d.f.=2 p<.001

Table 2 (television)

Information Subsidies Discarded/Kept by News Setting

News Setting	Discarded	Kept	Total	
City	64%	36%	100%	N=464
State	86%	14%	100%	N=321
National	93%	7%	100%	N=234
TOTAL	78%	22%	100%	N=1019

X2=96.17 d.f.=2 p<.001

(undefined observations=4)

Note. From "Information Subsidy and Agenda Building in Local Television News" by D. Berkowitz and D. B. Adams, 1990, *Journalism Quarterly*, *67*, p. 727. Copyright 1990 by Journalism Quarterly.

Table 3 (radio)

Information Subsidy Not Used/Used by Story Type

Story Type	Not Used	Used	Total	
Preplanned	68%	32%	100%	N=119
Information	88%	12%	100%	N=229
TOTAL	82%	18%	100%	N=348

X2=20.91 d.f.=1 p<.001

Table 4 (television)

Information Subsidies Discarded/Kept by Story Type

Story Type	Discarded	Kept	Total	
Preplanned	57%	43%	100%	N=323
Information	87%	13%	100%	N=700
TOTAL	78%	22%	100%	N=1023

X2=109.28 d.f.=1 p<.001

(undefined observations=0)

Note. From "Information Subsidy and Agenda Building in Local Television News" by D. Berkowitz and D. B. Adams, 1990, *Journalism Quarterly*, *67*, p. 728. Copyright 1990 by Journalism Quarterly.

Table 5 (radio)

Information Subsidies Not Used/Used by Organization

Organization	Not Used	Used	Total	
Education	76%	24%	100%	N=79
Non-Profit	81%	19%	100%	N=64
Special Interest	83%	17%	100%	N=23
Government	83%	17%	100%	N=86
Business	84%	16%	100%	N=96
TOTAL	81%	19%	100%	N=348

X2=2.20 d.f.=4 p=.69863

Table 6 (television)

Information Subsidies Discarded/Kept by Kind of Organization

Organization	Discarded	Kept	Total	
Non-Profit	66%	34%	100%	N=125
Special Interest	67%	33%	100%	N=163
Education	79%	21%	100%	N=195
Business	82%	18%	100%	N=276
Government	84%	16%	100%	N=263
TOTAL	78%	22%	100%	N=1022

X2=29.76 d.f.=4 p<.001

(undefined observations=1)

Note. From "Information Subsidy and Agenda Building in Local Television News" by D. Berkowitz and D. B. Adams, 1990, *Journalism Quarterly*, *67*, p. 727. Copyright by Journalism Quarterly.

Table 7 (radio)

Originating Organization Subsidies by News Setting

Organization	Local	State	National	Total	
Education	62%	28%	10%	100%	N=79
Non-Profit	62%	17%	21%	100%	N=64
Special Interest	48%	30%	22%	100%	N=23
Government	33%	53%	14%	100%	N=86
Business	35%	40%	25%	100%	N=96
TOTAL	47%	36%	17%	100%	N=348

X2=36.03 d.f.=8 p<.001

Table 7 listed in the same order as Table 5

Table 8 (television)

Organization Providing Information Subsidies by News Setting of Subsidy

Organization	City	State	National	Total	
Non-Profit	82%	11%	7%	100%	N=125
Special Interest	50%	11%	39%	100%	N=162
Education	32%	67%	1%	100%	N=195
Business	42%	15%	43%	100%	N=273
Government	40%	44%	16%	100%	N=263
TOTAL	45%	32%	23%	100%	N=1018

X2=344.33 d.f.=8 p<.001

(undefined observations=5)

Note. From "Information Subsidy and Agenda Building in Local Television News" by D. Berkowitz and D. B. Adams, 1990, *Journalism Quarterly*, *67*, p. 728. Copyright by Journalism Quarterly.

Table 9 (radio)

Information Subsidy Unopened/Opened by News Setting

News Setting	Unopened	Opened	Total	
Local	14%	86%	100%	N=162
State	23%	77%	100%	N=124
National	32%	68%	100%	N= 62
TOTAL	20%	80%	100%	N=348

X2=10.46 d.f.=2 p=.00534

Table 10 (radio)

Information Subsidy Unopened/Opened by Organization

Organization	Unopened	Opened	Total	
Education	16%	84%	100%	N=79
Government	18%	82%	100%	N=86
Business	20%	80%	100%	N=96
Special Interest	26%	74%	100%	N=23
Non-Profit	27%	73%	100%	N=64
TOTALS	20%	80%	100%	N=348

X2=3.2131 d.f.=4 p=.52281

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